

OSWESTRY & BORDER CHRONICLE

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TOP WHERE SOLD

Key summit will discuss broadband coverage

RURAL businesses can't plan for the future while the countryside is at the back of the queue for superfast broadband, Montgomeryshire Assembly Member Russell George has said.

The AM has revealed politicians will gather for a summit on March 20 in a bid to improve the coverage in the region.

Mr George will host the talks and said areas on both sides of the Shropshire/Powys border are severely handicapped by the patchy internet service.

Welsh government minister Julie James has agreed to attend the summit. Mr George said: "We can no longer afford to be the poor relation when it comes to fibre broadband."

"I'm delighted that the minister has agreed to attend this important broadband summit, which will be an invaluable opportunity for community leaders from across Montgomeryshire to question Government on its plans to improve broadband coverage."

"It remains a significant concern to me that many rural communities

across Montgomeryshire appear to be excluded from the fibre broadband upgrade or, at the very least, are at the back of the queue when it comes to receiving superfast speeds."

He said some progress had been made, but added: "There are many areas that still find themselves with inadequate broadband, with only two thirds of premises able to receive

superfast speeds. The reality is that we, in North Powys, are some way off receiving universal access to next generation broadband. The goalposts have been repeatedly moved and businesses have been unable to plan for the future. We should press the minister to bring forward a concrete timescale for the extension of superfast broadband to every property."

ACTION CALL ON FOULING 'BLIGHT'

Report by Naomi Penrose

WELSHPOOL'S mayor says he wants more dog owners to be fined for not picking up after their pets – and his message was echoed by his counterpart in Oswestry who says dog fouling is a blight on the community.

The mayors were speaking after a dog owner was fined £75 for not cleaning up after their dog had fouled on the street.

Powys County Council issued the fixed penalty notice to the dog owner from Welshpool after a member of the public reported it. The incident took place on the Oldford estate in Welshpool. Councillor John Powell, cabinet member for environment and sustainability, said: "We understand the impact dog fouling has on our communities and we are determined to tackle this issue."

The legal action has been welcomed by Welshpool Mayor Steve Kaye. Councillor Kaye said: "The more people fined the better, because it then acts as a deterrent, making people think twice before they leave their dog's mess."

He also hit out at the culprits responsible for leaving more than 20 bags filled with dog waste hanging from a tree near the Flash Leisure Centre in the town.

"What an absolutely disgusting way to behave, especially in an area used by so many people," he said.

In a bid to help combat the problems, a group of frustrated residents have recently set up a Keep Welshpool Tidy group in response to fly-tipping and dog waste plaguing the town.

Oswestry Mayor Paul Milner said: "The majority of dog owners act responsibly and clean up after their dog. Unfortunately it's the minority, it's the 0.5 per cent who let everyone else down."

"Not only does dog mess blight our green spaces, the bacteria from it is extremely harmful, especially if it makes contact with children. They could lose their sight."

• Tidy – See Page 5

Fundraising walk will be really good for the heart



Villagers get ready for the fundraising walk which will help Llanymynech and Pant Parish Council buy defibrillators. Photo: Jamie Ricketts.

A RURAL community between Oswestry and Welshpool has launched an appeal to buy life-saving defibrillators.

Llanymynech and Pant Parish Council wants to put three of the heart-start machines on buildings to the west, east and at the centre of the area it covers.

Fundraising is already underway for the machines, which includes a walk for people of all ages.

Councillor Dilys Gaskill said the Cross Guns at Pant has agreed to have a defibrilla-

tor mounted on its building while the others would go on the Pant Institute and the Llanymynech Village Hall.

"The village hall is next to the well used playing fields, home to the local football club," she said.

"We want to ensure that if there are any emergencies there are defibrillators available 24/7."

The fundraising walk will be held on Sunday at the Llanymynech Heritage Area.

Councillor Gaskill said: "The paths are all

wheelchair and pushchair friendly so everyone can enjoy a walk."

"And for those who want to, they can also go up on to Llanymynech Hill for more industrial heritage and fantastic views."

People can go along to the Stables at the heritage area anytime between 11am and 1pm and pick up a family friendly walk guide leaflet. A bucket for donations will be put out.

There will also be refreshments available.

More information about the event is available at www.llanymynech.org.uk

CRIME

Bans are dished out over unruly behaviour in pubs

SIX people have been banned from pubs in Oswestry as part of a crackdown in which landlords are being armed with drug-detecting wipers.

An urgent meeting of pub managers was called following rising problems with drug and drink-fuelled behaviour. The meeting heard a man who threatened a lone female licensee with violence was handed a three-year ban from pubs.

Members of Pubwatch also heard two men had been banned from pubs in Oswestry after drug detecting wipers revealed they had an illegal substance in their possession in a toilet cubicle of a pub, resulting in a 12-month ban each.

Pubcans can use the wipers on surfaces in their pubs to determine whether drugs have been used on the premises. They change colour if drugs have been used on a particular surface.

The wipers have been used by pubcans in Oswestry, Market Drayton, Whitchurch and Wem in a bid to tackle recreational drug use – particularly cocaine – in Shropshire's market towns.

It was also revealed that a man who assaulted a member of staff at a town pub was barred for three years.

Bans were also dished out to a man who ignored a three-year ban for the second time, resulting in his ban increasing to five years, and a woman who had been stealing from other customers. She was banned for 12 months.

ACCIDENTS

Woman is airlifted after serious crash

A WOMAN was airlifted to hospital after being cut free from a car involved in a crash near Oswestry.

A man was also taken to hospital by ambulance following the crash which happened at Upper Hengoed, at about 5.40pm on Saturday.

It was the second serious crash in the area on Saturday with fire crews earlier cutting a man and a woman free from the wreckage of a crash on the A5 at Oswestry. The crash happened at the Whittington roundabout and involved two cars. The road was closed as a result of the crash.

INSIDE

Sports kit boost for Africa project



PAGE 2



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Report by Sue Austin

A POULTRY expert has hit out at the "complete madness" of the different rules for tackling avian flu in England and Wales.

One area deemed 'high risk' in Shropshire, where farmers and breeders have to keep their birds indoors, is split by a section of Welsh land subject to completely different regulations.

Andy Cawthray says this means birds on one side of the River Severn will be cooped up, while those on the other can be turned out.

"Yet it is the river itself that has the highest risk of attracting wild birds with the disease," he said.

From Tuesday next week birds across the whole of Wales will be again be allowed outside, provided the farmers and owners have bio-security in place to ensure wild birds are not attracted to their sites.

But in England the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, has divided the country into low and high risk areas, with those in the latter still required to keep their birds under cover.

Mr Cawthray, a poultry breeder, lecturer, and writer says the situation has given rise to a ridiculous postcode lottery.

"The situation in Shropshire is complete madness," he said.

"We have the Severn Vyrnwy confluence, the meeting of two rivers. Water courses are known to be high risk areas as water fowl from Europe will gravitate to lakes and rivers.

"Yet because the confluence is also the border of England and Wales birds in Melverley will be kept in while those in Crew Green can free range again after February 28. Its a postcode lottery." The well known breeder from Whittington, a low risk area, has himself run down his flocks to the bare minimum, and as yet has not begun any breeding for the coming season.

"My incubators are sitting gathering dust," he said.

"I did not want to produce chicks that would have to live indoors all the time with the welfare issues that would bring. And even with the regulations ending for me at the end of the month, I don't know if bird shows and auctions will be allowed. Also, I am not sure that I want to produce birds that, come November and December next year when migration begins again, will face another lock-down."

Charity boosted by donation of sports kit



Sportsjam MD Matt Burton hands over donations to Kenyan Schools Project husband and wife team Bill and Lynn Morris

A CHARITY which provides football kits and educational tools to children across the poorest parts of Kenya has been presented with kits thanks to staff from a Shrewsbury business.

Kenyan Schools Project received the support from sportswear retailer Sportsjam as the firm supplied two full football kits.

The project is run by husband and wife team Bill and Lynn Morris, who travel to Kenya twice a year to help young children and babies in schools and orphanages.

Since 2004, they have raised more than £80,000 to fund everything from desks and school equipment to football kits and new classrooms.

Talking about the importance of the kits, Mr Morris, a porter at Oswestry School, said: "They will make a huge difference – the children these kits go to have very few possessions, so for a team to be able to wear a matching football kit is a massive boost for them.

"They wear the kits with such pride. It's an amazing feeling to be able to give them such a simple gift that generates so much enthusiasm."

The duo began the Kenyan Schools Project in 2004 after a dream holiday in the country and a trip to the Mkwakwani School.

Mr Morris said: "The children were sit-

ting on concrete floors, barefoot and having to share pencils, paper and books.

"The trip really got to both of us and we could not stop thinking about the children."

From that day forward, the couple have worked tirelessly from their home in Oswestry to the benefit of children living thousands of miles away.

Sportsjam managing director Matt Burton, who also manages football team Haughmond FC, said: "Playing team sports is so important to young people's personal development, especially in teaching valuable teamwork skills."

"I'm delighted to be able to donate these kits."



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Street pastor plan takes step forward

PLANS to introduce street pastors in Oswestry to help keep vulnerable and intoxicated people safe on a night out have moved a step closer.

Further talks are planned in the coming weeks about the potential of bringing the volunteer-based initiative to Oswestry.

It comes after members of the town's Pubwatch group agreed, at their latest meeting to look at supporting the scheme.

Street pastor schemes already operate successfully in Shrewsbury and Telford. Steve Jones, chairman of Shrewsbury Street Pastors, said the meeting with Oswestry Pubwatch members was "incredibly positive".

He said: "We're hopeful now that we will get something up and running in Oswestry. We have the support of the police, Shropshire Council and now publicans in Oswestry, which is fantastic. It's all dependent now on whether church volunteers are willing to get involved and offer their support." Mr Jones said he was hoping to meet with church members by the end of March and if they agreed to get behind the scheme, he would be happy to offer volunteers the training and guidance needed to get it off the ground in Oswestry.

The street pastors scheme sees volunteers from churches take to the streets between 10pm and 4am to help revellers.

Greens' deputy leader to visit

THE deputy leader of the Green Party of England and Wales, Amelia Womack, will be coming to Oswestry to find out what young people expect from politicians.

Miss Womack will take part in a public meeting at Hermon Chapel Community Arts Centre on Saturday at 11.30am. Shropshire's Green Party Councillor Duncan Kerr said: "As one of the youngest people in a leadership position of any political party, Amelia is particularly interested in hearing from young people about life in Oswestry, and talking to them about their hopes for the future and what they expect from their elected representatives.

"Amelia has also expressed interest in meeting other people in Oswestry and throughout Saturday she will be out and about in the market, town centre and on the streets of the town."

Solar and wind farm site numbers may be cut

Report by Naomi Penrose

THE number of sites for solar and wind farms located on picturesque countryside as part of a local authority's 10-year blueprint for development could be reduced, it has been revealed.

Powys County Council has announced the number of local search areas in the county, designated for wind and solar developments, could be cut down, as part of the further work being carried out on its renewable energy assessment, before it is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate.

Under the plans, tourist attractions such as the Kerry Hills, part of Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural, could have become sites for wind turbines or solar panels.

But now council officials have confirmed additional work will be undertaken to consider a range of issues that are likely to have an impact on the renewable energy assessment. Work will include a 7km visual impact buffer placed around existing and proposed wind farms to take account of cumulative impact, as well as a 7km buffer being applied to all designated landscapes which include two national parks – Snowdonia and the Brecon Beacons – and two areas of outstanding natural beauty – the Shropshire Hills and the Clwydian Range and the Dee Valley.

Powys County Council has also pledged "consideration" of landscape and grid connection, as well as "appropriate" buffers for special protection areas to protect bird species, requested by Natural Resources Wales.

The authority says these factors are likely to see a decrease in the number of local search areas in the county.

Montgomeryshire MP Glyn Davies has praised the council for taking the concerns of the public "seriously" after objections were raised by nearly 600 residents.

He said: "It's good news, a far better response than what I was expecting, and great that the county council has listened to the people and their concerns, and not given in to pressure from the Welsh Government. One of the biggest concerns of mine has also been the cumulative impact because of the serious damage proposed pylons and the sheer number would have on Mid Wales, so this is certainly pleasing."

Technology for tots at pre-school



Geraint Hopwood, owner of Chirk Computer and Laptop Centre, presents the equipment to Izabella Morris, aged 3, and Lizzy Williams. Photo: David Hamilton.

PRE-SCHOOL was once all about playing in the sand tray or enjoying storytime.

Now the very young are just as likely to be found using a computer or tablet.

Chirk Pre-school Playgroup has been presented with six tablets and a laptop from local business, Chirk Computer and Laptop Centre, with a promise to help if the new technology needs repair in the future.

Staff at the pre-school, which

meets in the parish hall, are going to load child-friendly apps on the equipment and say they are looking forward to using it with the children who are aged between two and four years old.

Lizzy Williams, supervisor, said that the Welsh education inspectors Estyn, had decreed that pre-school children should have access to laptops or tablets to give them the skills to prepare them for school.

"We are very grateful to the Chirk

Computer and Laptop Centre for donating this equipment. It will be very well used here," she said.

As well as being able to use apps the children will also be able to take photos print them out and use them in art.

"We are also looking forward to taking the tablets on trips so we can record our day," Mrs Williams said.

The Chirk Pre-School Playgroup meets from 9am to 11.30am on Mondays to Thursdays.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Homes application in village granted

A NEW green around a war memorial will be part of plans to build 17 new homes in an historic village.

Knockin near Oswestry dates back to medieval times. Now it is to see its population boosted by the new development.

Shropshire Council has granted permission for the homes north of Lower House Farm to the Bradford Estates. Local residents said during consultation they hoped that the new homes would bring more young families into the village. The Bradford Estates says that development has been set back from the road to provide an area of new open space in the heart of the village and to preserve the setting of the village war memorial. Part of the development will have a farmstead feel to it while another part will be built like a village street.

Bungalows plan wins permission

PERMISSION has been given by council planners for three bungalows to be built on the site of a former village plant nursery.

Jones Brothers Ltd has been granted planning permission for the development in High Street, Weston Rhyn, near Oswestry.

The site has not been used since 2007 when outline plans for a similar scheme were approved.

However, that permission has now lapsed so fresh approval was needed from the council planners for work to be carried out.

The plans include three two-bedroom bungalows each with a study, a small rear garden and two parking spaces.

Spiritual group to meet up again

THE guest medium at the next meeting of Oswestry Spiritual Centre will be Peter Henry.

Organisers say Mr Henry brings along music and uses songs to find the links between this world and the spirit world. Oswestry Spiritual Centre meets this evening (Thursday) from 7.30pm to 9pm with doors open at 7pm. The cost of admission to the meeting, which takes place at Oswestry's Memorial Hall, is £3.50.

For more information contact 07891084071.



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Staff sickness forced the closure of maternity unit

Report by Naomi Penrose

STAFF sickness forced Oswestry's midwife-led unit to close overnight.

Heath bosses had to contact expectant mothers to inform them and offer them an alternative location if they gave birth.

Oswestry's maternity unit was closed for 12 hours between 8pm and 8pm on February 10 and February 11. Sarah Jamieson, head of midwifery at The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital Trust, said: "Unfortunately due to last minute unexpected staff sickness, we had to temporarily suspend services at Oswestry midwife-led unit. We contacted women who had chosen to deliver at Oswestry and who were due to give birth in the near future to inform them and offer an alternative location to give birth if they went into labour on the Friday night.

"I would like to apologise for any inconvenience this may have caused."

This is the latest in a string of closures to the county's maternity units because of staffing issues. The problems affected Bridgnorth and Shrewsbury midwife-led units on Christmas Day, Oswestry's midwife-led unit on December 29 and January 9, and Ludlow's midwife-led unit on December 31 and January 5.

Last weekend mums-to-be were not able to give birth at Royal Shrewsbury Hospital when the Midwife-Led Unit at the hospital closed for essential maintenance work.

The unit was closed from 5pm on Friday until 8pm on Sunday due to on-going refurbishment work being undertaken at the Copthorne Building, which houses the unit.

The work being carried out involved isolating the water supply, which means it would not be practical for the unit to remain open.

All expectant mothers booked in at Shropshire MLU, who are 37 weeks pregnant or more, or those who had antenatal appointments at the unit, were contacted and offered alternative arrangements, including birth at another MLU, at the consultant-led unit at the Princess Royal Hospital in Telford or a home birth. Antenatal appointments were offered at home.

A campaign is continuing over plans which could see Oswestry's maternity unit, and services at Bridgnorth and Ludlow, downgraded to birthing centres.

Campaigners are worried that a downgrading of the service would mean mothers would be unable to have overnight stays and those in labour out-of-hours would have to telephone an on-call midwife to open up the unit up.

A seminar was held last week to discuss maternity services and bosses said women whose births are considered low risk in Shropshire will continue to have choice about where to give birth.

RESIDENTS have banded together to fight back against litter louts in their town.

A group of frustrated residents have set up the Keep Welshpool Tidy group in response to recent problems with fly-tipping and dog waste plaguing the town.

Nearly 50 sacks of fly-tipped rubbish were recently cleared in Welshpool as part of an operation by town council staff.

The piles of rubbish were found dumped behind Welshpool Town Hall and in the Foundry Lane area of the town. And more than 20 bags filled with dog waste were recently found hanging from a tree along the canal at the end of the playing fields near the Flash Leisure Centre.

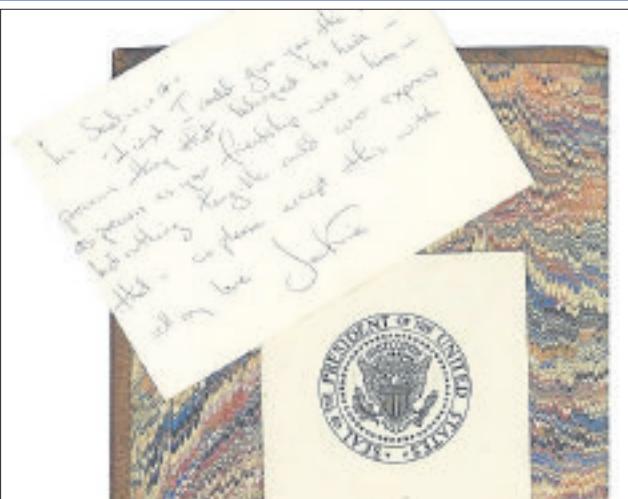
The group has already started taking action, with volunteers out and about litter picking in the town, and more than 150 people have already 'liked' the group's Facebook page.

In a separate development, three fly-tippers have been tracked down and warned they will be convicted if they are caught doing it again.

Robert Robinson, clerk to Welshpool Town Council, has confirmed three offenders have been traced. Each has received a warning letter, and a record will now be kept of the incidents. Mr Robinson has warned, if caught fly-tipping again, action will be taken to convict them.

The town clerk also said Welshpool Town Council would now keep a record of how much rubbish is cleared from fly-tipping.

Treasures to be auctioned



The Shelley book and Jackie Kennedy's note to Lord Harlech

SHROPSHIRE-BORN Lord Harlech is set to raise about £1 million by selling off more than 500 antique treasures including many from his family's former home.

Old Etonian property developer, Lord Harlech, 30, was born near Oswestry and became the seventh Lord Harlech when his father died on February 1 last year.

The book, which is expected to fetch up to £6,000, will be sold with the affectionate note Mrs Kennedy sent with the book in 1964 to Lord Harlech.

It says: "To David on his birthday. This Shelley is a book that Jack had since we were married and I don't know how long before. He kept it in his room at the White House - which is why his seal is in it."

"I wish I could give you the most precious thing that belonged to him - as precious as your friendship was to him, but nothing tangible could ever express that, so please accept this with all my love, Jackie."

Lord Harlech asked Mrs Kennedy to marry him but she gently turned him down.

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BREEZE ABOUT TOWN

I try to avoid bringing politics into this column but I have been seething all week after accidentally watching a patronising Tony Blair launch a pathetic bid to stop Britain leaving the EU.

The accident happened because I sat down for a quick breakfast of tea and toast and made the mistake of flicking on the TV, just as our former PM rose to take the podium at a conference organised by the Remain campaign under the label of "Open Britain".

Demonstrating all the public speaking skills which once made him a convincing and popular leader Mr Blair made me spit my toast across the living room with his unbelievable call for an uprising of the British people against Brexit.

A call which sent daggers deep into the back of his former Labour colleagues and Jeremy Corbyn in particular.

Mr Blair was delusional in his claims that Britain could stay in a reformed EU and was condescending in saying the British public was not informed enough about the dangers of voting "leave".

Where was he when the doomsday predictions were being rammed down our throats?

Probably picking up large cheques across Europe for his undoubted public speaking skills.

He accused those of us who voted to leave Europe as being "ideologues" which sent me running for the definition book to discover that I am someone "dedicated to a certain way of thinking whether political, philosophical or religious in a near fanatical way".

Well isn't that a case of pot calling the kettle black Mr Blair as you plead for a movement to rise up against the Government and the will of the majority of people living in Britain?

And isn't it hypocritical from a man who, when in Downing Street, twice promised a referendum on the EU and twice failed to deliver?

I have grown tired and weary of the whole Brexit affair.

We voted to leave and whether that proves to be the right decision or not we have to live with it.

Just like we have had to live with the repercussions of an Iraq war which Mr Blair blindly forced us into on false evidence of finding weapons of mass destruction.

Now that's what I call an ideology Mr Blair.

Once I had calmed down I found myself wondering if I had misjudged the former Prime Minister, only to find his arguments being booted into political touch on both sides of the debate.

The idea of him leading an uprising is laughable.

Next he'll be wanting us to ditch the Pound in favour of the Euro. Oh I forgot, he's already tired of one.



Technology will help police officers, Mr Campion told Oswestry Town Councillors



Investment has been made to upgrade Oswestry's crime-busting CCTV system



Mr Campion was quizzed about the future of Oswestry Police Station

WORKING FOR YOU



In the 21st century broadband is as vital a public utility as power and water. Many businesses are now dependent upon a fast and reliable broadband service.

Last November I had a very frank but constructive meeting with the Chief Executives of BT, EE and Openreach. They were all fully aware of the problems in North Shropshire because they say that I have written more letters to them than any other MP, raising issues in 71 postcodes. Clive Selley, the Chief Executive of Openreach, agreed to visit North Shropshire early this year to see just how bad the situation has become, and work on urgent solutions to the problems my constituents and local businesses face. It is unprecedented to have the Chief Executive of Openreach visit and I am extremely grateful to him and his team for taking the time to do so. Mr Selley was able to meet Mr McGuinness only two miles from Market Drayton, whose service has deteriorated from 1.8 Mbps to 0.6 Mbps, such that he can no longer even complete his VAT return online. Openreach acknowledged that this was unacceptable and agreed to look at practical solutions.

We then held a productive meeting in Whitchurch, which was well-attended by members of the Town Council, Shropshire Council and the Chamber of Commerce, as well as local residents. Service is currently better on the outskirts of Whitchurch than in the centre of town. Provided any remaining issues with Exchange Only lines are resolved, Openreach expect a superfast service at 24 Mbps by December 2017 and hope for 60 Mbps.

They can devote their time to being visible and I want to retain them." He also praised the Specials in the force. He said: "This part of the force area you have people willing to train to become Specials."

"The thin blue line in Oswestry, particularly on a Saturday night, would be much thinner without the Specials."

Meanwhile, the commissioner has welcomed the appointment of Amanda Blakeman as the new Deputy Chief Constable for West Mercia Police.

Her appointment is a promotion from her current post of Assistant Chief Constable, Local Policing, a position she has held permanently since May last year.

She joined West Mercia Police in 1992 and throughout her career has held various posts within the alliance.

Chief Constable Anthony Bhangam said: "Following a comprehensive selection process, I am very pleased to welcome Amanda as our new Deputy Chief Constable. She brings with her a wealth of experience and operational knowledge and clearly understands what is required to support the communities of West Mercia."

Mr Campion said: "I am extremely pleased in the chief's choice."

"I'm confident that Amanda will do an excellent job for the communities of Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Worcestershire."

Owen Paterson
North Shropshire MP

Town councillors told of policing plans for future

West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner John Campion has spelt out his plans for Oswestry

IMPROVED technology will help allow police officers to spend more time out on the beat, Oswestry Town Councillors have been told.

The council recently welcomed John Campion, Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia, to talk about his plans for policing in the region.

He said police officers in the region are to be given smart phones and laptops to ensure they can spend more time on the streets.

A pilot scheme in one section in the south of the force has led to officers spending up to three hours longer a day in the community.

Mr Campion said he wanted to see every office equipped with the technology by the end of the year.

"At the moment it seems officers are attached to their police station by a piece of elastic," he said.

"I want to set them free."

"Everyone has a smart phone these days – except police officers."

Speaking to the town council, Mr Campion said the pilot scheme involved 40 officers.

"I have given each officer a smart phone and a laptop so that they don't have to return to the police station during their shift," he said.

"It has led to between one to three hours of extra visibility per officer."

"We want to roll that out to the rest of the force, to the 2,000 police officers in West Mercia by the end of the year."

"I want to move quickly on this."



John Campion pictured with Prime Minister Theresa May

With that one to three hours of extra visibility you should see your cops more often."

The commissioner said his initiative would work better than using money for recruitment to put more officers on the streets.

He revealed he would be spending up to £30 million of reserves as part of his £212 million budget in the coming year.

He said among his priorities was to reform the force by updating technology.

He also pledged to ensure the fabric of the force's buildings were in good repair.

West Mercia's Police and Crime Commissioner says he is in favour of officers sharing buildings with other organisations.

He was quizzed over the future of Oswestry police station and said that,

with the investment in the CCTV headquarters at the station in Park Street, he did not envisage the building being sold.

"There has been a lot of money spent on the CCTV control room."

However Mr Campion said he was very much in favour of organisations sharing resources, including buildings.

"In Whitchurch there is a scheme to move the police station to the fire station building," he said.

"I understand this is progressing and is now subject to planning approval."

Mr Campion further pledged to help victims of crime, even if there was no court appearance.

"I want to help victims to enjoy life again," he said.

"In the past we have focused too much on getting people to court when we should be focusing on the victims

and how we give them the right level of support."

Mr Campion said cracking down on organised crime, drug dealing and child sex exploitation was 'non-negotiable' and he wanted to ensure officers were properly equipped with the right number of armed officers and those with Tasers.

Mr Campion said that the wider policing family was bigger than those in uniform.

He added: "Community support officers give a physical presence. They are the eyes and ears of the community. Introduction of PCSOs was a good thing."

"They can devote their time to being visible and I want to retain them." He also praised the Specials in the force. He said: "This part of the force area you have people willing to train to become Specials."

"The thin blue line in Oswestry, particularly on a Saturday night, would be much thinner without the Specials."

Meanwhile, the commissioner has welcomed the appointment of Amanda Blakeman as the new Deputy Chief Constable for West Mercia Police.

Her appointment is a promotion from her current post of Assistant Chief Constable, Local Policing, a position she has held permanently since May last year.

She joined West Mercia Police in 1992 and throughout her career has held various posts within the alliance.

Chief Constable Anthony Bhangam said: "Following a comprehensive selection process, I am very pleased to welcome Amanda as our new Deputy Chief Constable. She brings with her a wealth of experience and operational knowledge and clearly understands what is required to support the communities of West Mercia."

Mr Campion said: "I am extremely pleased in the chief's choice."

"I'm confident that Amanda will do an excellent job for the communities of Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Worcestershire."

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Library does a superb job for community

DURING my time as mayor I've had the privilege to meet so many charities, organisations and groups that provide help, advice, guidance, support and essential services for residents living within our community.

On this occasion I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who works at Oswestry Library.

They provide a friendly and a professional service for many thousands of residents a year who live within our community.

I along with many of my colleagues was relieved to hear that the threat to close our library by Shropshire Council is now over

and that it can still be enjoyed not only by those who use it today but also for the future generations to come.

The library that we hold so dear does not only provide a book lending service any more but has diversified into so many other areas.

It now provides not only a book lending service but plays a major part in helping so many residents that live within our communities, whether this is by putting on many events during the year for children and adults alike or in raising awareness with the aim to help many residents with their various health issues or even the outstanding

service that is provided by the Local Family & History Group, the list goes on.

These are just a few of the services and activities that our library provides which are for the greater good of us all.

Once again I'd like to thank everyone at Oswestry library for the outstanding professional service they all provide for the many, many residents they serve who live within our communities throughout the year.

Regards
CLLR PAUL MILNER
Oswestry Mayor
Victoria Ward

The changing face of business in town



The Rogers & Jackson store in Oswestry in the 1960s. They were builders and plumbers merchants. The picture was emailed in by Nigel Walters of Oswestry who says: "The Iceland store now sits on the same site in Oswald Road."

Nigel would get us the best deal in the Brexit talks

BRITAIN desperately needs a strong person to take our Brexit negotiations by the scruff of the neck. That person should, I believe, be Nigel Farage.

He was recently asked what he thought of the newly appointed EU ambassador.

He made a concise and telling reply - 'they've exchanged one knighted career diplomat with another knighted career diplomat!'. In 1939 Britain was in a desperate position and needed a 'man of the hour'.

That man was Winston Churchill. He cut through civil service red tape to get things done, leading to a final military victory over Germany.

In 2017 we will again face Germany and the other 26 EU countries. Fortunately this will be a political/trade battle rather than a military one.

It will still be an independence battle that we need to win.

Nigel Farage, being an MEP since 1999 has wide experience of the EU and knows very well how it works.

BOB ROSE
Stirchley Park

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

Readers' Letters,
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Ketley,
Telford, TF1 5HU

EMAIL

letters@oswestry
chronicle.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Government was taken in

OWEN Paterson MP is right about the coming energy crisis because adherence to so-called 'green power' plans may cause our economy to collapse.

Our Government has been taken in by glib pseudo scientists and con men, like those in Northern Ireland's renewable energy initiative, whose scheming resulting in 20 year contracts for businesses, who are paid £160 for every £100 of energy they waste by heating empty spaces.

W F KERSWELL
Picklescott

Do these awards really go to people who deserve them?

CONGRATULATIONS to Ken Dodd on his knighthood, well deserved.

Congratulations to Lynn Faulds Wood for refusing hers.

It's about time that the honours were given only to those who have done something special.

Fashion designer?

Not really.

Only for those who can afford these overpriced pieces of material.

Only five per cent of these accolades are deserved or earned.

Let's give them to genuine deserving folk.

Helicopter winch men putting their own lives at risk.

Lifeboat crews, paramedics.

Our research doctors, pioneers in medical breakthroughs, benefiting all mankind not just the privileged few.

Let the government awarding these accolades wake up to reality.

They will then mean something.

M EDWARDS
Oswestry

Lords are now redundant as power has been shifted away

FORTY-THREE years ago when Britain was a democracy the elected government made our laws and our House of Lords was the official Second Chamber whose duty was to keep a close eye on the government in this field.

The laws that rule Britain today are made by unelected foreigners behind closed doors in Brussels, those laws do not need the attentions of a second chamber because they are undemocratically foisted upon us and we cannot refuse, or even amend them - this, I believe, makes the eight-hundred plus unelected peers in the very expensive House of Lords totally redundant. Inessential, surplus to establishment and zero-hours contract material!

Lord Blencathra tells us that 'the Lords does a brilliant job revising and improving sloppy legislation which comes from the Commons but fails to mention when it actually was or what percentage of our laws are now beyond our control and the greatest problem with the EU has never changed - it is impossible to find information you can rely upon as "fact"! The internet mentions every figure between five and 85 per cent and you will notice that neither the Lords or the Commons are prepared to tell us the truth.'

Remember the poll tax? Mrs Thatcher's poll tax proposals benefited every member of the House of Lords and hardly any of the working class - guess which way the Lords voted?

BOB WYDELL
Oswestry

Support given for voting ID

PROPOSALS for voters to have to prove their identity at the ballot box has my full support.

There have been squeals from some quarters about the government's proposals but it is frankly overdue.

Fraud may not have been widespread, though no one can say for sure, but any such dishonesty taints our electoral system.

And I am pleased that "harvesting" postal voters for submission by activists is to be banned.

I personally would go further and tighten up the eligibility of postal voters to those who are physically unable to get to a polling station.

Places including Birmingham have shown postal voting offers an easy opportunity for exploitation by those wishing to cheat the system.

It is therefore appropriate that it is one of the places chosen for inclusion in this ID pilot scheme.

For those without photo ID two or three forms of proof, such as utility bills, could be used.

All adults, rich or poor, should have the ability to vote.

The requirement for voter ID works in Northern Ireland and it should work here too.

JAMES CARVER
UKIP
MEP

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Comedy festival is tribute to friend

A FORMER performing arts student is organising a comedy festival as a tribute to a young friend who died.

The festival is being held to raise money for a charity which is working to prevent youth suicide.

According to the Mental Health Foundation, suicide is the leading killer of young people in the UK aged 20 to 34, with 6,700 suicides a year.

James Manford is holding his comedy night at the Hub Theatre in St Martins School in St Martins on March 4, from 7pm.

It will raise money for the Papryus charity as a tribute to Sarah Powell who died at the age of 27 in 2014 at her home in Rhosygadfa, near Gobowen.

James said: "I want to raise money for this charity because a friend of mine, Sarah, committed suicide in 2014."

"We had no idea at all that Sarah was down. It was a big shock."

Tickets, for over 16s only, are £10 and can be bought by emailing j.lawrencemanford@gmail.com

Town mayor to hold ward surgery

OSWESTRY Mayor Paul Milner is holding one of his regular surgeries this weekend.

The mayor will hold the surgery on Saturday, giving residents a chance to raise any issues they may have with him. Councillor Milner said: "I'm holding my regular monthly ward surgery for residents living on Victoria and Morda with Sweeney Wards on Saturday between 11am and noon at Oswestry Library."

"I'm always pleased to meet residents and to try to help with any local issues or questions that you may have at local council level or if you would like to discuss anything I may be able to help with. All discussions are held in a private setting and will be kept confidential if asked."

Report by Pam Kingsley

SEVERN Trent's controversial takeover of Dee Valley Water has been met with mixed reactions after the deal was completed.

The £84m takeover was confirmed following a decision by opponents to drop a legal appeal after the High Court ruled the acquisition could go ahead.

Russell George, Assembly Member for Montgomeryshire, welcomed the news.

He said: "Montgomeryshire is the only area of Wales served by Severn Trent and if this merger brings about a better deal for Montgomeryshire residents, it is to be welcomed."

"I will continue to call for the newly merged company to honour their commitments towards their customers, keep bills as low as possible and take a leading role in flood management."

"I look forward to seeing whether Montgomeryshire will benefit from both Severn Trent and Dee Valley Water joining forces."

However, his counterpart for Clwyd South, Ken Skates, said it was potentially bad news for current employees of Dee Valley Water, which is based in Rhostyllen, near Wrexham.

He said: "I was bitterly disappointed for Dee Valley Water employees that their views have not been listened to and the takeover by Severn Trent was given the go-ahead."

"The workforce in Rhostyllen are the reason the company is held in such regard, particularly for its excellent customer service."

Dee Valley Water employs about 180 people and has 230,000 customers across the Wrexham and Chester areas, including close to the Shropshire border around Chirk.

'Refugee camp' outside MP's office



A 'mini refugee camp' was set up outside Glyn Davies's office in Welshpool by campaigners

A "MINI refugee camp" was set up outside Montgomeryshire MP Glyn Davies's office in Welshpool by campaigners to highlight and celebrate the contribution of migrants to the go-ahead.

The protest was part of the One Day Without Us national day of action on Tuesday.

Campaigners for Mid-Wales Refugee Action organised a series of events to bring attention to the impact of Brexit on migrants.

The group said they set up the

protest outside Mr Davies's office in Welshpool's High Street to highlight "the negative impact of his support for leaving the European Union and his hard-line stance on refusing child refugees entry to the UK".

Tegwen Brickley, spokesperson for Mid-Wales Refugee Action, said: "Glyn Davies has an appalling track record, he voted against child refugees being allowed to enter the UK, leaving thousands of children desperately vulnerable to trafficking, sexual exploitation and death."

In response to the protest, Mr Davies said that the campaigners had been raising issues that he mostly agreed with.

He said: "I too think Britain could take in more refugees displaced by conflict in Middle East, though I don't agree with where they should come from – I support the most humanitarian response possible."

"I also think we should be guaranteeing that immigrants living legally in the UK will be allowed to remain in the UK."

Fears at loss of playing fields allayed by councillor

FEARS that sports facilities will be lost when Welshpool gets two new schools have been quelled by a county councillor.

After being contacted by several concerned parties Councillor Graham Breeze says he hopes sports organisations will benefit from the building of a new super school on the playing fields at Welshpool High School with the possible provision of a new 3G pitch.

Powys County Council has agreed to build a new 360-place English language school on the high school's Salop Road playing fields along with a new 150-place Welsh language school on the current Maesdyre School site sparking a social media frenzy about lost facilities.

The new schools will replace the current Ardwyn Nursery and Infant School, Gungrog Church in Wales Nursery and Infant School, Oldford Nursery and Infant School, and Maesdyre School.

Councillor Breeze said he had been assured that the authority was keen to mitigate against this loss by providing alternative sports facilities.

"There is talk of a 3G pitch which could be used all year round," he said. "This would be a fantastic facility for the schools and local sports clubs. I am informed that initial discussions have taken place with the FA of Wales and other sports governing bodies about whether they are interested in working with the authority to support this, and the design contract winner will be expected to include provision for sports facilities in the plans."

"The plans have gone out to tender and once awarded the design stage will start. I will be encouraging the council to engage fully with the schools and the community to ensure that there is no loss of sports facilities. Welshpool already lags well behind other towns in that department."

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Festival will give some career ideas

STUDENTS from across Mid Wales will be attending a careers festival next month.

More than 125 exhibitors including multinationals, local companies, universities, schools, public sector organisations, colleges, training companies and the voluntary sector will all be attending the Powys Careers Festival on March 8. The event in Llanllyfni has been organised by the Positive Pathways Powys Group to show young people the wide range of opportunities which are available to them when they finish compulsory education.

Any employers or organisations who wish to attend should contact Careers Wales on 02920 84 6371 or email Jacqueline.jones@careerswales.com.

The event will be open to the pupils and students during the daytime but from 3pm-5pm the free event will be opened up to members of the public.

Town gets ready to rock once again

A MUSIC festival will this year celebrate its 10th anniversary of rocking Welshpool.

Welshpool Music Festival will make its return on May 28, the 10th year it has run in the town.

The free and popular event will see a host of acts play live at venues across the town.

This year the event will remember the late Ian Scott, a guitarist with the band The Infamous.

The Infamous played at the festival several times over the years.

Guitarist Ian died in September last year.

Acts who want to play this year's festival are asked to email wmfest@ymail.com or for further details visit www.welshpoolmusicfest.com

Informal workshop will help mature motorists

Report by Naomi Penrose

MATURE drivers are being given the opportunity to brush up on their road knowledge thanks to an informal workshop.

Powys County Council's road safety unit will be holding its driver theory refresher workshop on March 15, in Welshpool, from 1.30pm to 3.30pm.

Aimed at drivers in the county aged 65 years and over, the two-hour and classroom-based informal workshop will provide attendees a refresh of the Highway Code and driver licence requirements.

It will also cover topics including night-time driving, medicine and alcohol laws, and personal safety behind the wheel.

Attendees will also be provided with details of a practical one-hour driving assessment if required. Councillor John Brunt, cabinet member for road safety said: "Ensuring our roads are safe for everyone is an important aim and our road safety unit is at the forefront of many successful initiatives. There has been a significant amount of work carried out by the unit to cut the number of collisions and casualties in Powys. We hope that this free workshop will help preserve and conserve valuable driving skills and make drivers more aware of what influences our driving, ultimately leading to a reduction in collisions and casualties in this vulnerable driving group.

"I would urge mature drivers to take advantage of this fantastic scheme, which really could be life-saving."

For further information contact the road safety unit by emailing road.safety@powys.gov.uk or call Bridget Farrington on (01686) 611586.

Invertek in line for prestigious award



Rhidian Welson from Invertek Drives of Welshpool

HOT on the heels of receiving a hat-trick of accolades at the 2016 Powys Business Awards, Welshpool-based variable frequency driver manufacturer Invertek Drives has been named as a finalist in the Welsh Business Awards.

The company is shortlisted in the "Success through overseas trade" category with winners due to be announced at a gala dinner to be hosted by TV presenter Gethin Jones this evening (Thursday).

Now in their 15th year, the awards run by South Wales Chamber of Commerce and sponsored by the University of South Wales, are designed to recognise the successes and achievements of Welsh businesses and Invertek was named Welsh Company of the Year and also won the Experienced International Business category at the 2014 event.

Sales and marketing director Rhidian Welson said: "We are honoured to have our achievements recognised by being shortlisted for this award as we are very proud to be a Welsh success story which we are building on with plans for a new factory to be built in Welshpool later this year."

Deal paves the way for rally action

THE organisations involved in negotiations to repair forest roads after rallying events have reached agreement to enable rallying in Welsh forests to continue.

The contract was signed between Rally 4 Wales Contracts Ltd and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) in Welshpool.

The formal agreement means that Rally 4 Wales will be responsible for repairing NRW's roads after motor-sport events for the next two years.

Tim Jones, NRW's executive director of operations for North and Mid Wales, said: "This agreement is great news for rally fans and for Wales's rural economy."

"It is also great news for Welsh taxpayers as the cost of repairing the roads after each event will be borne by the event organisers, rather than being subsidised by public money."

Jamie Edwards, managing director of Rally 4 Wales, said: "We've come a very long way to reach this point."

Mr Edwards said: "Our thanks go to Natural Resources Wales and their staff for working hard with us to develop this unique agreement from scratch."

Window damaged in vandal attack

VANDALS smashed the window of a business in Welshpool.

Officers from Dyfed-Powys Police are investigating after the damage to the window of Health Focus, on Severn Street in Welshpool, which they say happened sometime between February 4 and 6. Anyone who has any information or knows who is responsible is asked to contact the non-emergency 101 number.

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POWYS County Council has announced its support once again for Earth Hour—the annual, global celebration of the planet.

At 8.30pm on Saturday, March 25, the council will be joining forces with landmarks across the globe such as the Senedd in Cardiff Bay, Sydney Harbour Bridge, and New York's Times Square, as they show their support.

Earth Hour's unique display of darkness has become a global phenomenon with hundreds of millions of individuals coming together each year.

This year Earth Hour marks its 10th year, and by taking part, the council is showing its commitment to taking action to tackle climate change.

Cllr John Powell, Powys County Council's cabinet member for environment and sustainability, said: "Local authorities like ours have a big role to play in tackling climate change, so we're looking forward to turning off the lights on March 25 to show our support."

Crews called out to caravan fire

A FIRE involving a disused caravan had to be dealt with by firefighters.

It happened in Shrewsbury Road, Llynclys, near Oswestry.

Two crews from Oswestry were called to the scene at about 6.35pm on Tuesday last week and used a hose reel jet and thermal imaging camera to deal with the fire.

Meanwhile, an Audi has been stolen from a property in Llanymynech near Oswestry.

The white Audi A3 was taken from a property overnight between February 7 and 8.

Anyone who has any information about the theft should contact PC Green 739 at Welshpool Police Station on 101 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Drug dealer drove while under the influence

By Dominic Robertson

A DRUG dealer who was caught drug driving twice in a week has been given a suspended prison sentence.

Louis Morris, 24, had been stopped twice by police and on the second occasion in Coppice Road, Oswestry, officers saw him throw an ice cream tub out of the car over the roof into a nearby garden.

As officers searched his Mini a message was also received on the defendant's mobile phone with a request to buy cannabis.

At Shrewsbury Crown Court Morris was given a total of eight months in prison, suspended for a year.

Judge Peter Barrie said it was clear that Morris had been street dealing, but recognised his efforts to get clear of drugs.

In addition to the suspended jail sentence Morris was also ordered to complete a rehabilitation programme, carry out 80 hours unpaid work, and was banned from driving for two years.

He was also ordered to pay £100 costs.

Morris, a trainee chef, of Rose Hill Drive, Oswestry, had admitted failing to provide a blood sample and being in possession of cannabis with intent to supply.

Hugh Williams, prosecuting, said on July 5 when the defendant's discarded ice cream carton was recovered it contained 18 grammes of skunk cannabis worth around £180 in a plastic zip bag, and a set of scales.

Officers recovered £130 in cash from Morris and the phone from behind the passenger seat.

Danny Smith, for Morris, said his client's addiction led him to get into debt with dealers who offered him a way out by dealing drugs.

He said he now realised the impact of drugs and was now clean.

Youngsters' tune hits the right note



Youngsters from Woodside School in Oswestry composed a song about the Co-op shop's charity initiative

CHILDREN at an Oswestry primary school have turned into composers to help publicise a charity initiative at a shop.

The year two students at Woodside School were special guests at the Co-op in Victoria Road where they gave a musical presentation to

shoppers. They sang a song they had written extolling the virtues of the retail company's charitable support.

Councillor Peter Cherrington who called in to hear the young singers said: "The children were absolutely amazing."

"Their enthusiasm was conta-

gious and made you want to sing along." The store's membership scheme means that one per cent of everything shoppers spend on own brand goods go to a community charity.

It also gives members five per cent back on Co-op goods.

New project aims to help jobless find employment

A £3.3 million project aimed at getting people into work has been launched in some of the most deprived areas of Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin.

The Together scheme will give one-to-one help to those struggling to find jobs in Market Drayton, Ludlow, two areas of Oswestry, Harlescott, Meole, Monkmoor, Castlefields and Ditherington in Shrewsbury and the Woodside, Brookside, Donnington and Wellington areas in Telford.

Its aim is to tackle poverty by supporting people into work and training, gain confidence and learn new skills. Training and employment organisation Landau Limited is joining forces with more than 20 other organisations. The Together project is part of the Building Better Opportunities programme funded by the European Social Fund and the Big Lottery Fund, which has worked with The Marches Local Enterprise Partnership to identify local need and priorities. Partnership director Gill Hamer said: "One of the LEP's priorities is to get people into jobs and out of poverty. This project will provide much-needed support to hundreds of people across Shropshire who want to improve their chances of getting and keeping a job. By helping put them on the path to employment, we are in turn, thanks to this funding, building thriving communities."

Sandie Dent, the Together project manager, said: "This will focus on those who are furthest from the labour market."

It will provide pre-employment support for people aged 19 and over who are not in work and focus on encouraging participants to get involved in training, education or volunteering opportunities and to eventually be able to progress towards and into employment. The project will collectively employ 84 staff, providing 16 new jobs and securing 40 posts.

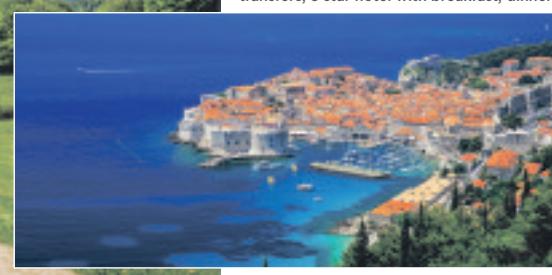
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The beautiful villages of Llansantffraid and Llanymynech sit in the glorious Mid Wales countryside but are also within easy travelling distance to the nearby towns of Oswestry, Shrewsbury and Welshpool.

Visitors come to the area from near and far to enjoy stunning scenery and the villages and the surrounding area are well served with caravan parks, pubs, restaurants, bed and breakfasts and churches. Other local businesses in the area include convenience stores, hair salons and veterinary centres while the villages' schools lie right at the heart of the community. Llansantffraid can trace its history back many years and the village's name can be translated as "Church of Saint Bride" in the Welsh language. Llansantffraid has also played an important role in the history of Welsh football. The village club was developed into the team now known as The New Saints, current Welsh champions with the club now based at Park Hall near Oswestry.

Llanymynech has a proud industrial heritage. The village is home to one of only three remaining Hoffmann kilns in the British Isles, and the only one with a chimney. The kiln at Llanymynech was used for lime burning. The area around the kiln is designated as the Llanymynech Heritage Area.



The picturesque village of Llansantffraid sits in the Mid Wales countryside

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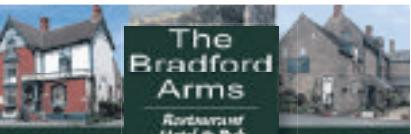


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Village proud of its history and its great community spirit

Commercial feature

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The collieries at Ifton, Chirk Bank, Quinta, Trehowell, Moreton Hall and Preesgweene were, geologically, an extension of the Denbighshire coalfield.

Coal production ceased in the area with the closure of the last remaining colliery in the area at Ifton in 1968. Ifton Colliery Band was formed in 1916 by the miners of the Ifton Colliery. Although the colliery closed the band has carried on the proud name of Ifton and there are still members of the band whose families were miners in the colliery.

St Martins has a variety of amenities and facilities and a wide selection of businesses including public houses and takeaway food restaurants and is home to Shropshire's first all-through school.

Much of the village's community life takes place at the St Martins Centre, a multi purpose building with disabled access and facilities.

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Stans Superstore is St Martins' best known business and is a major employer

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Blair's Brexit call fails to impress MPs

TONY Blair's call for the public to "rise up" against Brexit has been met with a withering response from the region's MPs.

The former Labour Prime Minister said "progressives" should make it their "mission" to reverse the outcome of the referendum last June.

Mr Blair said that when people had voted in the referendum, they had not known the full cost of withdrawal - including the potential break-up of the UK, with Scottish independence now "back on the table" and with renewed credibility.

However, the suggestion has been dismissed by Shrewsbury and Atcham MP Daniel Kawczynski, his North Shropshire colleague Owen Paterson, and Montgomeryshire MP Glynn Davies.

Mr Kawczynski, an ardent Brexit campaigner, insisted that Mr Blair's intervention would do more damage than good for those who wish to remain in the EU.

Mr Paterson warned that a failure to carry through on the result of the referendum would lead to a constitutional crisis.

He said: "This is the biggest vote in British history on a single issue. If we do not take back control as demanded by the British people then there will be the most shattering damage to the whole integrity of the political class, something which Tony Blair has contributed to himself already."

Mr Davies said he believed Mr Blair's comments would make no difference and "will be forgotten about tomorrow".

He said: "I am not in the least bit surprised. Tony Blair wanted us to join the Euro, he is a European enthusiast. He will be appalled that the British people disagreed with his views."

Bungalows bid is submitted

A TWO-storey house could be demolished to make way for nine bungalows, if plans are given the go-ahead.

A planning application has been lodged with Shropshire Council for the residential development, located between Upper Church Street and Beresford Gardens in Oswestry.

The firm behind the plans Shrewsbury-based Morris Property has said the properties are aimed at the retirement market. The bungalows are proposed to have two bedrooms, with a lounge, kitchen, bathroom and hallway, with one car parking space per plot with up to three visitor spaces. A design and access statement by Design & Planning Associates Limited (DPA Ltd), on behalf of Morris Property, said: "The proposal has been designed to support additional housing with no major impact on the surrounding area. The applicant is keen to strike a balance between providing additional housing accommodation without major impact on the surrounding natural landscape. The nine bungalows proposed are aimed at the retirement market and this characterised by the size and nature of the development put forward."

"No large scale two storey properties are proposed, but single storey in keeping with the surrounding area and limiting the impact on neighbouring properties."

Authors set to visit book store

THE authors of two popular children's and teen books will be visiting Oswestry to talk to readers as part of World Book Day.

Andy Griffiths, the bestselling author of the Treehouse series, and Holly Smale, Geek Girl author, will chat with young readers, answer questions and do book signings as part of the international event, designed to encourage more children to read.

Both events will be free of charge and will be drop-in sessions at Booka Bookshop, Church Street.

Holly, bestselling and award winning author of the Geek Girl teen fiction series, will be in town on Wednesday from 3.15pm to 4.15pm. Anyone who drops in will be invited to design a pair of Geek Girl glasses, with a prize for the best pair of glasses.

Andy will be at the shop on Thursday from 4pm to 5.30pm. During his visit children will be challenged to design a unique addition for their own treehouse.

Suit of armour is put on display at village castle



Sarah Thursfield with part of the armour on display at Whittington Castle. Photos: Alan Evans.



The armour was found in the moat at Whittington Castle near Oswestry

A SUIT of armour dredged up from a castle moat has finally been put on display.

The armour, found in the waters of Whittington Castle, proved to have a strange history when it was taken along to the Antiques Roadshow two years ago.

For experts dated some of it back as far as 1600 which means it could have been used in the siege of Oswestry. But some proved to be a 19th century copy.

Heritage Lottery Funding has enabled

the Whittington Castle Preservation Trust to mount an exhibition of the armour which was recovered from the castle moat in the late 1960s and has been donated by the Lloyd family.

Sarah Thursfield, a trustee of the castle, took on the project of getting the armour on display.

She said: "The 10 pieces of armour on display were found in the castle moat in about 1970.

"We don't know how long they had been there or who put them in."

"We do know there was 'Parish Armour' stored at the castle in the 1620s.

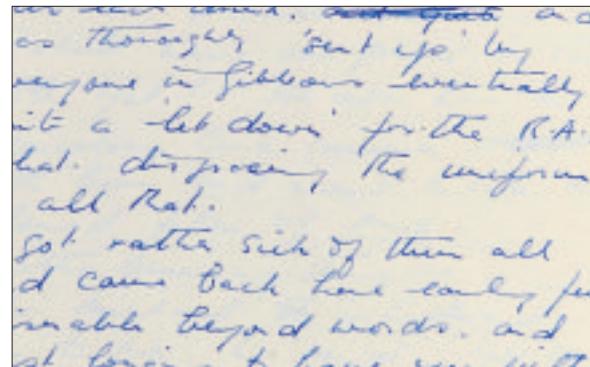
"This was for use when the local men were called out to fight with their landlord - the nearest the country had to an army."

Castle manager, Sue Ellis, said: "The mystery of the armour in the moat deepened when Sarah took the armour to the Antiques Roadshow at Trentham Gardens in 2015.

"It turned out that some of the armour may be 19th century copies. So what was it doing

in the moat at the same time as the real armour? We don't know whether the real armour was worn at the siege of Oswestry in 1642 or whether Thomas Lloyd had some of it made in the 1830s to display in the restored gatehouse. And we have no idea how it ended up in the moat." The castle display is open Wednesday to Sunday and also Bank Holiday Mondays from 10am-4pm. This year is the 10th anniversary of the re-opening of the castle after a major renovation. A series of events are planned.

Collection of letters reveals men's wartime love affair



Words exchanged between Gilbert Bradley and Gordon Bowsher



Mark Hignett, of Oswestry Museum, looks at the letters with LGBT festival organiser Peter Roscoe

Report by Dominic Robertson

THE story of a secret gay relationship revealed in a collection of wartime love letters has featured as part of a national LGBT history event in Shrewsbury.

Mark Hignett, of Oswestry Museum, delivered a talk on the revealing collection at the "Back in Time 2" event, staged in Shrewsbury as part of the national festival of LGBT history.

The letters had been bought for the museum but Mr Hignett did not realise the epic love story contained within until he studied them more closely. The 62-year-old uncovered the relationship as he transcribed the letters, which he bought on eBay for £1,000 after hunting for war memorabilia for the museum. The series of letters written to young Gilbert Bradley, from Cheltenham, who was doing his army training at Park Hall Camp, Oswestry, by his partner Gordon Bowsher, from Devon, in the Gloucestershire Regiment, tell the story of their forbidden relationship at the start of World War Two.

Mr Hignett said: "The value of these letters lies in the fact most love letters from homosexuals at the time were burned, because if they were found, they would have been used as evidence. The story really has a life of its own, it's a fantastic love story to rival the Titanic." Homosexuality was illegal in Britain until 1967, and the couple talk about keeping their relationship secret as well as travelling to California together after the war. There are more than 300 letters from Gordon, written between 1939 and 1944. Gilbert died in 2008 aged 92, and Gordon had died around 15 years previously. The talk was one of a number of events staged at the festival.



Mark Hignett with the secret wartime letters



Gunner Gilbert Bradley and the letters sent between the two men during wartime

PROPERTY

YOUR WEEKLY
GUIDE TO HOME
BUYING AND
LETTING

Refurbished stone built cottage enjoys far reaching views

A refurbished detached stone built cottage, Ivy Cottage at Hyssington, Montgomery has far reaching views over the surrounding countryside.

It is for sale through Balfours at £330,000.

It has an entrance hall, a sitting room, dining room, study, four bedrooms, a kitchen, conservatory, bathroom, one en-suite, lawn, parking and a garage.

Ivy Cottage is situated in a delightful rural position on the eastern fringes of the village of Church Stoke between Montgomery and Bishops Castle.

The area is well served with a range of local amenities including the renowned Harry Tuffins supermarket, whilst a more comprehensive range can be found in Shrewsbury, Ludlow and Newtown. Both Welshpool and Craven Arms have regional rail links to the intercity network and there are good road communications to both the West Midlands via the M54 and South Wales.

This area of the country is popular not only for its beauty but for its abundance of recreational opportunities. There are lovely walks and rides throughout the surrounding South Shropshire hills and nearby Offa's Dyke. Other opportunities include racing at Ludlow and golf at Welshpool, Ludlow, Church Stretton and Shrewsbury.

Ivy Cottage is a refurbished detached stone built cottage with accommodation over two floors.

The property retains many attractive and period features. It is presented to a very high standard and is well proportioned throughout with views over the surrounding countryside.

The ground floor provides two reception rooms, a study and a modern kitchen which leads to a large traditionally constructed conservatory to the rear of the house.

The first floor has four good sized double bedrooms including an en suite and a family bathroom.

Outside, the gardens of the property include a lawned area, a patio and a gravel driveway with a garage and off street parking.

KEY FEATURES

- Village fringe position
- Four bedrooms
- Conservatory
- Far reaching views
- Garage & parking

HYSSINGTON £330,000



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CREW GREEN

£775,000

House in a tranquil hill location with around 11 acres

A charming house in a tranquil location set on Bausley Hill with around 11 acres of woodland and paddocks, Bausley Hill Farm at Crew Green has outstanding views across Shropshire.

It is for sale through Balfours at £775,000.

It has a dining hall, sitting room, study, kitchen, garden room, a ground floor bedroom with an en-suite shower room, four further bedrooms, a large bathroom, large shower room, a double garage, handling barn, gardens, mature and established woodland and paddocks.

Bausley Hill Farm is situated at the eastern end of the beautiful Breden Hills, on the Shropshire/Powys border. The property reaches around the hill with an iron fort on the top and woodland extending down to beautiful natural meadowland below.



The surrounding area is well placed for superb off road riding and walking. Bausley Hill Farm is unique with a charming house nestled into the hilltop.

The farm dates back to the 17th century with an immense oak frame and exposed studwork, although the house was completely renovated in 1993 and recently extended to provide a ground floor bedroom with an en-suite bathroom.

The front door opens to a dining hall off which is the sitting room featuring an inglenook fireplace. Off the dining hall is a large study and a farmhouse style fitted kitchen with a Stanley range.

To the rear of the house is a garden room currently used as a dining area looking over the patio and garden. Upstairs there are four bedrooms, three of which have fitted wardrobes, a bathroom and shower room.

Outside, there is double garage with a loft above, garden, handling barn, 3.5 acres of paddocks and 5.5 acres of mature and established woodland.

There is a further 45 acres of wood and woodland grazing available separately.

Close to the village of Crew Green, Bausley Hill Farm is easily accessible to Welshpool, Oswestry and Shrewsbury and is within commuting distance of Telford and West Midland centres.

Contact Balfours on 01743 353511 for more information.

Superb property includes two separate homes and lawned gardens

TREFLACH

£425,000

>>>

This superb detached residence in Oak Lane, Treflach is a high spec self build consisting of a spacious three double bedroomed home plus a detached triple garage with a self-contained apartment.

It is for sale through Town & Country at £425,000. The property sits in landscaped grounds with lawned gardens and extensive parking. Situated in a tucked away location in the pretty village of Treflach, all amenities are close by with Oswestry town a five minute drive away. The property offers great scope for two families with adaptable accommodation. The property has been built to a very high standard by the present owners and includes superb insulation, high specification fixtures and fittings along with Cat 5 wiring installed. All rooms are decorated immaculately with carpeting and flooring being in 'as new' condition.

A gravelled driveway leads to the property and is accessed via two farm style timber gates. The driveway provides parking for numerous vehicles leading to the triple garage. The rear garden includes a patio and lawn.

Contact Town & Country on 01691 679631.



Super Georgian country house has lawns and tennis court

OSWESTRY

£1,250,000

<<<

A fully restored Georgian country house adjoining parkland and open countryside, Pen-y-Llan Hall on the edge of Oswestry is for sale through Bowen Son & Watson at £1,250,000.

It has a vestibule, entrance hall, inner hall, drawing room, study, morning room, dining room, conservatory, cloakroom/WC, sitting room, playroom, kitchen, utility room, pantry and cellars.

It also has a master bedroom with dressing room and en-suite bathroom, four further bedrooms all en-suite, bedroom six, dressing room, two attic rooms, a bathroom, detached former annexe with planning permission for a workshop, stores, kitchen, cloakroom/WC, garaging and domestic buildings.

There are also lawned gardens and a tennis court and woodland of around 2.8 acres.

Contact Bowen Son & Watson on 01691 652367.





Spacious town house is sited in a quiet position near amenities

OSWESTRY
£159,950 <<<



Home has lovely views over picturesque river

LLANFAIR CAEREINION
£57,500

A mid-terrace, one bedroom property, 2 Pool Road, Llanfair Caereinion is on the market through Halls for £57,500.

It is on the market through JJ Dell&Co with a guide price of £159,950 and there is no chain. The property benefits from gas fired central heating and there is an entrance hall, cloakroom, living room, kitchen, bathroom, two bedrooms, front garden and two parking spaces.

The property occupies a convenient position within the town only a few minutes walking distance into the town's shopping centre.

The home is an end-terraced house traditionally constructed of brick under a slated roof. The accommodation has the benefit of recently recovered roof, gas fired central heating and pvc double glazing.

Contact JJ Dell&Co on 01691 653437 and 680212.

The property is located within walking distance of the town centre. The accommodation comprises sitting room, kitchen with range of base and eye level fitted kitchen units and ample space for a table and chairs, first floor bedroom and shower room. A small balcony at the rear with access to the kitchen provides a sitting out area with lovely views over the River Banwy.

The town has shops serving everyday needs. There is also a Post Office, part-time library, church/chapels, playgroup, leisure centre, two public houses and a hotel, as well as highly regarded primary and secondary schools.

Contact Halls on 01938 555552 for more details.

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Chancellor urged to drop buy to let tax changes

A campaigning landlord organisation is calling for UK Chancellor Philip Hammond to scrap planned changes to taxation for the buy to let sector in his forthcoming March Budget.

The Residential Landlords Association (RLA) said that the UK should follow the example of Ireland by scrapping planned changes to mortgage interest relief or, at the very least, applying it only to new borrowing for new purchases in the sector.

It comes as new figures reveal that buy to let purchases fell by 63 per cent last year and landlords are also concerned that as well as the tax relief changes due to start in April a proposed ban on letting agent fees will also hit the sector with landlords not investing in future portfolios and rents rising.

The Government has committed to boosting the fledgling Build to Rent sector which will see more blocks of apartments aimed at young people who cannot afford to buy or don't want to buy being built in cities across the UK.

But there was disappointment that the much-awaited Housing White Paper, while confirming that more homes to rent are needed, did not seem to address the concerns of landlords in the private rented sector, many of whom own just one property that they let.

The RLA is hoping that a boost will come from the Budget instead for buy to let landlords. It wants the recently imposed extra three per cent stamp duty on additional homes to be waived for landlords investing in a new property or refurbishing an empty or converted property that is adding to the housing stock.

It is also calling for the Chancellor to remove the anomaly that means that VAT can be reclaimed on goods and services in connection with the construction of a new dwelling when it is intended for owner occupation, but not when it is constructed to rent out.

The RLA believes that much could be done to encourage landlords and this does not need to be at the detriment of first-time buyers. For example, it suggests that landlords wanting out could be encouraged to sell properties to sitting tenants by applying the new 20 per cent rate of Capital Gains Tax in such circumstances, supporting the Government's home ownership ambitions.

It also suggests a review of the financial capabilities of landlords to meet the new energy efficiency requirements coming into force from 2018 making EPC recommended improvements tax deductible.

"This is not just a wish list that will benefit landlords and tenants, but one that will benefit the economy as a whole. The Treasury Select Committee warned a year ago that measures taken to curb buy to let would come at a cost to the wider economy, and we would ask the Government to take heed of this," said Alan Ward, RLA chairman.

"The time for change is now and we hope the Government will take the opportunity to grasp the nettle and rethink some of the unfair tax changes set to have devastating impact on private rented sector landlords ahead of the Budget on 08 March," he added.

Surge in first-time buyers as landlords purchase fewer homes

The number of first-time buyers in the UK housing market increased significantly in the last 12 months as purchases by buy to let landlords fell, new research from surveyors shows.

In January first-time buyer valuations surged to a third of housing market activity, up from 25 per cent at the beginning of 2015 while landlords' investment was down by 63 per cent year-on-year.

The research from Connells Surveys and Valuation suggests that Government policies relating to extra stamp duty for additional homes and upcoming tax changes have hit the buy to let market.

In the first month of 2017, first-time buyer valuations rose by 21 per cent and increased the importance of first-time buyers to the overall housing market with first-time buyers now responsible for 34 per cent, a rise of almost 10 per cent.

"With UK employment close to an 11-year high and weekly earnings rising, many first-time buyers are fitter financially than they were a year ago.

"Aided by cheap mortgages rates, aspiring home owners have seized the opportunity to get their first foot on the ladder," said John Bagshaw, corporate services director of Connells Survey & Valuation.

"The demand for homes has been particularly high in January and as a proportion of the overall valuations, first-time buyers are now even more important to the health of the market making up a third of activity," he explained.

He believes it is a sign that Government policies to help first-time buyers are working but also said that more needs to be done.

First-time buyers tend to be younger couples, keen to start families, so they need to be able to move up the rungs on the property ladder easily, he pointed out.

"The policies to ensure the right homes are built in the right places within the new White Paper should help boost the supply of family homes, but the Government must also deliver on their pledges to build homes faster to ensure a healthy housing



sector over the next few years," he added.

The research also shows that the number of valuations carried out on behalf of people selling property rose 10 per cent in January 2017, compared to the same month last year.

But, while valuations for first-time buyers and those selling homes increased, landlord investment has declined by 63 per cent year-on-year.

The report says that this is partially due to a surge in buy to let purchases in January 2016 as landlords brought

forward purchases to avoid the stamp duty surcharge but landlord investment is still well down on January 2015.

"The new White Paper's aim of helping tenants through supporting the build to rent sector could be rendered ineffective with this recent drop in investment from private landlords.

"While a potential increase in build to rent homes will take some years to filter through, the slowdown in buy to let purchases will soon start to bite, with fewer rental properties coming onto the lettings market.

"This shortage of supply could fuel competition from tenants with the potential to push up rents," said Bagshaw.

"There is a serious risk that the Government's attempt to increase the number of affordable homes to rent will also be overshadowed by the impact of taxation policies aimed at private landlords.

"As the Government's definition of affordable is linked to the market averages, rather than tenant incomes, rising rents could mean new affordable homes are out of reach for those just about managing," he concluded.

High level of demand for Pickstock's village properties

The second phase of homes at Irvine Gardens, a hugely popular development in the centre of St Martins, will be available to move into from May 2017, the developer has announced.

Pickstock Homes is seeing a high level of demand for its Phase 2 properties, which range from a two-bedroom coach house – perfect for first time buyers – to three, four and five-bedroom family homes.

"The properties in phase one sold very quickly and we are seeing the same level of demand for phase two," said Camilla Pickstock, sales director at Pickstock Homes.

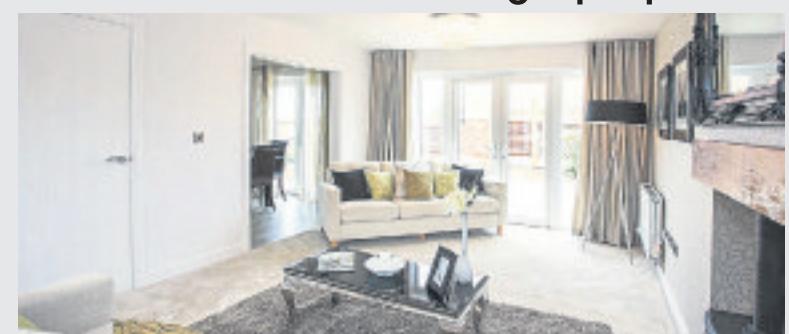
"Our new build homes are designed for modern families in mind and offer so many benefits, such as lower running costs and maintenance.

"One of the main advantages to buying off-plan is the chance to choose your own fixtures and fittings.

"We offer plenty of options to personalise your kitchen, bathroom and more."

A wide range of features are included as standard, from oak staircases and chrome door furniture to fully fitted, custom designed kitchens.

Buyers can choose from a wide selection of kitchen units, floor tiles, worktops and Zanussi integrated appliances. The bathrooms are fitted with high quality Roca sanitary ware for a stylish and luxurious finish.



With Pickstock Homes people can also benefit from the Government's Help to Buy Scheme. Designed to make the house buying process more affordable, the scheme enables house buyers to purchase a brand new home with just a five per cent deposit and it is available for existing homeowners as well as first-time buyers.

With prices at Irvine Gardens starting at £129,950, people could buy a new home with a deposit of as little as £6,497. Additionally, one of the properties

at Irvine Gardens is now available under Pickstock Homes' part-exchange scheme. Eden is a beautiful five bedroom home situated on a large corner plot on the edge of Irvine Gardens, with views of open countryside.

A part-exchange sale takes the stress out of moving and means the buyer could move to Eden swiftly and hassle free. For more information contact the Pickstock Homes team on 01691 677940 or visit www.pickstockhomes.com

Trust pledges to help fill the housing gap

A HOUSING trust has pledged to help fill the gap after it was claimed that not enough houses are being built across Shropshire to meet demand.

New figures say that nearly 45,000 too few new homes have been built over the last five years in the West Midlands.

Across Shropshire this figure is almost 1,700.

The National Housing Federation said last year less than 12,500 homes were built in the West Midlands, far below what is required to accommodate the 19,000 new households that are formed each year.

Across Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin, 1,320 new households a year are built.

That's 30,000 new households needing somewhere to live by 2039.

The federation says it is seeing more and more work being done by housing associations to the void.

In Shropshire, one such association is the Wrekin Housing Trust, which says it is committed to providing affordable houses in a bid to plug the widening gap between the number of properties in Shropshire and the people needing somewhere to live.

David Hall, head of property at The Wrekin Housing Trust, said: "Seeing many of our new schemes of quality affordable housing already come to fruition, with a further 1,332 in the offing across Shropshire and Staffordshire, is evidence of our commitment to the affordable housing gap in Shropshire."

"We welcome every opportunity to provide more much needed affordable new homes, be it for families just starting out or retirement housing, for example, our new ShireLiving schemes."

Director role joy for Chris

A MAN who has spent 15 years working in the caravan industry has been appointed an associate director of Shropshire's award-winning caravan, motorhome and campervan business, Salop Leisure.

Chris Jones, 38, from Pant, near Oswestry, has worked for the Shrewsbury-based company for two years, having previously been group sales manager and operations manager for Pure Leisure Group in South Lake District and sales manager for Talacre Beach Group, Plas Coch, Anglesey.

He has been promoted from business development manager to associate retail director of Salop Leisure's holiday homes division.

"I am delighted with the promotion, which is a new challenge that will allow me to put my own stamp on the role," he said. "It's a great opportunity for me to use the skills and knowledge that I have built up over the past 15 years. My transition from park operator to retail has gone extremely well and the company has enjoyed two years of superb growth."

Mr Jones is married to Paula and they have two children, Aaliyah, 13 and Kobe, 11. Standing at six foot seven inches, he's a former rugby union player with Oswestry and Shropshire and played basketball for teams in Wrexham and Oswestry.

Hundreds of tests cancelled

MORE than 350 driving tests in Shropshire were cancelled due to examiner sickness and annual leave in six months, figures reveal.

Examiners taking annual leave meant some pupils were forced to rearrange their tests after booking them.

And practical tests have been called off due to examiners being off sick or for other medical reasons such as physiotherapy appointments.

Ludlow had the most cancellations in the county with 171 between April 1 and September 30 last year.

At Telford, 89 were called off in the same period, while 86 were cancelled at Shrewsbury and 21 at Whitchurch.

No tests were cancelled due to bad weather or as a result of industrial action, according to the figures from the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA).

In the wider Midlands area, latest figures show a total of 1,100 HGV and car driving tests were postponed during the same period.

Jamie hitting new high notes during dream trip



Talented trumpet player Jamie Brownfield is ready to enjoy the high life

A MUSICIAN from a village near Oswestry has secured a gig of a lifetime that will see him play thousands of feet high at a VIP party flight across the Atlantic.

Trumpet player Jamie Brownfield, 24, from Llanrhedr ym Mochnant, is one of three musicians who have won the chance to play on the maiden British Airways flight from London to New Orleans.

Jazz musician Jamie, who was previously voted 'Rising Star' in the British Jazz Awards,

said he can't wait to play in New Orleans, the home of jazz and from where many of his musical heroes originate.

He said: "I still can't believe it's happening to be honest."

"I entered the competition not thinking in a million years I'd be one of the winners."

"In fact I completely forgotten that I'd entered until I'd picked up the voicemail telling me that I'd won."

"It still hasn't sunk in that I will be visiting



Jamie with his quartet the Jamie Brownfield Quartet at the Manchester Jazz Festival

the home of jazz where many of my idols are from. Thankfully I know some people there through music who are going to show me around.

"It's going to be incredible."

Jamie's quartet – the Jamie Brownfield Quartet – is his main project at the moment.

Their latest CD 'Go Down to New Orleans' was recently featured on Jamie Cullum's show on BBC Radio 2 as part of BBC Introducing.

He started on the cornet at the age of nine,

playing in a local brass band and by the time he was 12 was performing jazz in public.

Jamie, who works on the radios at Welshpool Airport and also has his private pilot's licence, will fly out from Heathrow tomorrow (Friday) and while on the trip, will be celebrating his 25th birthday. He added: "I can't wait now, it really is a dream come true that I will be visiting the place where it all started, as well as busking in the French Quarter, and meeting other talented musicians."

Warm jackets are not a baa-d idea for young lambs



This one-week old lamb looks fetching in his warm jacket as he awaits visitors to Park Hall Countryside Experience near Oswestry. Photo: Jamie Ricketts.



Jo Walker with one of the lambs at Park Hall Countryside Experience near Oswestry

Report by Sue Austin

MOST tiny lambs keep warm by snuggling up to their mum's woolly coat.

But when you are a cade lamb, whose mum has been unable to care for you, then you might need a helping hand.

The smaller lambs that are having to be hand reared at Park Hall Countryside Experience visitor attraction near Oswestry are sporting very fetching jackets to keep them warm until their own coats are warm enough.

The farm attraction has opened for the season.

The owners are hoping families will go along for see the lambs and enjoy the other activities.

Rachael Mottram from Park Hall Countryside Experience said: "We all enjoy our Lambing Live event at half term.

"Many of the ewes still have to lamb and who knows, you might get to see the birth.

"Children will be able to bottle feed the cade lambs at 1pm each day and at 3pm there will be an interactive sheep show when visitors can meet the sheep and lambs.

"We have excellent hygiene and hand washing facilities.

"The jackets some of the smaller lambs are wearing are simply to give them a little bit of extra help to keep warm.

"Most can snuggle up to their mums but those who are orphaned or may be their mums can't feed them might need some TLC.

"The jackets provide warmth that they would normally get from their mum."

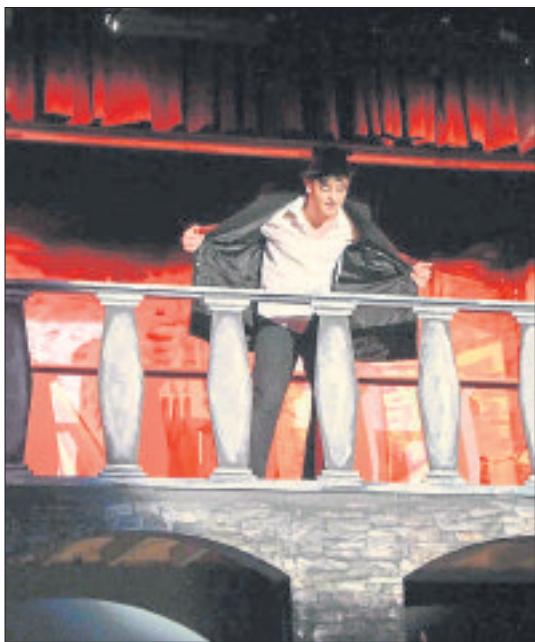
Visitors can also enjoy the new 3D spatial climbing globe and explore the World War One trench experience on site.



Blue is the colour for this little fellow



This little lamb looks proud as punch to have a new jacket to keep him cosy



Harrison Bickley as Bill Sykes in the production of Oliver!



Connor Williams as Fagin, surrounded by his gang in Oliver!



Charlie Brooke and Harvey Jones on stage during Oliver!

Talents shown

Report by Naomi Penrose

YOUNGSTERS at The Marches School in Oswestry have been involved in various initiatives in recent weeks, showing off their skills and talents.

Students from the performing arts department were kept busy preparing for the performances of their school production of Oliver!

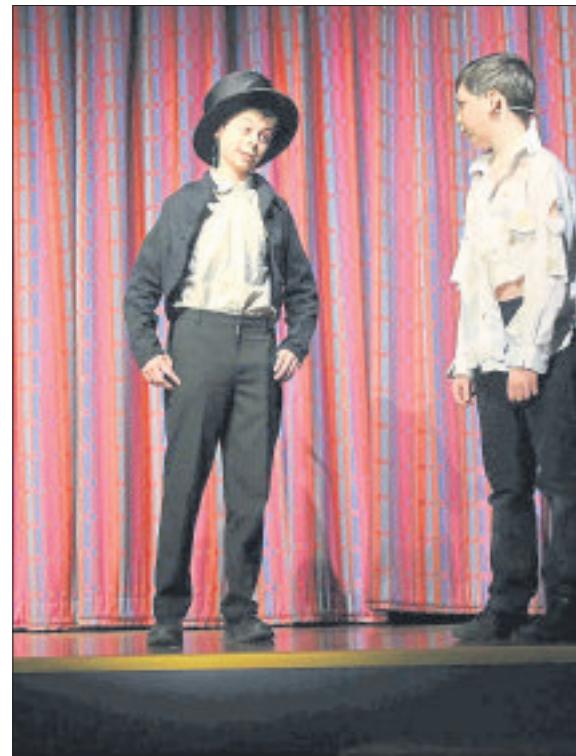
More than 50 students participated in the performance which was directed by drama teachers Natalie Wright and Sophie McGreal with music teacher Harriet Craddock-Jones as the musical director. Students performed to more than 500 primary pupils as well as performing three public shows. Year 7 students Charlie Brooke and Lewys Roberts shared the title role of Oliver. Year 12 student Connor Williams was Fagin and Year 11 student Eve Mountford played the famous role of Nancy.

Meanwhile Year 8 student Abbie Ball raised money for her local gym to encourage people of all ages to lead a healthier lifestyle. Abbie has been going to Basecamp Health and Fitness Centre in Ellesmere for nearly two years and raised money for new gym equipment by rowing a 26-mile marathon on a Concept2 indoor rowing machine with the owner of Basecamp, Danni Evans.

And Wilko's in Oswestry kindly donated a £20 voucher for The Marches School to spend on cookery equipment for the new GCSE food and nutrition course. Meanwhile, more than 70 students were treated to a ceremony during which they were presented with awards and given a chance to meet business owners and council representatives. The lunch was organised to honour members of the school who had excelled in the Futures Award initiative. The programme has been designed to prepare students to leave school with the skills they need to enter employment.



Eve Mountford played the role of Nancy in the production



Robbie Ackerman as the Artful Dodger and Charlie Brooke as Oliver



Joshua Wanless, Abagael Walmsley and Katie Cemeron with the new muffin tins bought from a donation from Wilko's in Oswestry



Abbie Ball with her Basecamp training hoodie



The Marches School held a ceremony to celebrate its Futures Award initiative

Memorial to remember mining past

THE mining history of a village near Oswestry will be commemorated with a permanent memorial to the industry and those who worked in it.

A statue is to be created to mark the closure of Ifton Colliery 50 years ago next year. The sculpture of a miner will be placed in the parish memorial garden in St Martins, with people having a say over what it will look like.

The pit, near St Martins, employed more than 1,300 men at its peak, but closed in 1968 due to underground fire problems and the loss of its markets.

An evening event has taken place to launch an appeal to pay for the statue and reveal the two alternative designs that members of the community and the miners can choose from. Councillor Sue Schofield, one of those on the anniversary committee said: "The statue will represent a miner and it is hoped that it will establish a permanent and lasting memorial that will serve as a reminder of the existence of Ifton Colliery and the individuals who worked there."

She said the aim was also to create a striking focal point at the entrance to the centre of the village and to inform visitors of the industrial heritage that was instrumental in creating the community of St Martins that exists today.

As well as the sculpture the committee is also building up an educational resource for current and future generations on history and heritage of the village community.

Fundraising will include the creation of a commemorative medal and it is hoped local families will have an opportunity to add the names of their relatives who worked in the mining industry to the walkway running alongside the statue.

Runners look to raise funds

TWO runners are joining forces for a fundraiser for orthopaedic research.

Bruce McKay and Louis McDonald are running the Virgin London Marathon on April 23 in aid of the Institute for Orthopaedics, based at Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital.

Louis McDonald started work at the hospital as a modern apprentice for the Institute of Orthopaedics and is now project manager in the IT department.

"I ran my first marathon in 2016 with an aim to do it in under four hours, but was 24 seconds over. So when I was asked to run the London marathon by orthopaedic consultant Rob Banerjee, for the Orthopaedic Institute, I had to say yes."

Bruce McKay, a supply chain director, said: "I started running in 2009 at The Great North Run to raise money for cancer research after being touched by cancer in the family."

"I have run many events for various cancer charities before talking on the London Marathon three years ago. This year I wanted to give something back to my home town." A Chinese buffet and karaoke night will be held at the China Palace in Oswestry on Friday next week to help raise the minimum £1,500 both runners need to enter. Tony Robinson, a patient at the orthopaedic hospital, will be providing the karaoke.

Talks held over trader parking

TALKS are continuing to ensure that a popular butcher can continue to attend a monthly market.

Jamie Ward was told to move his refrigerated van from the artisan/farmers' market in Oswestry earlier this year by a traffic warden.

It was the first problem he had encountered during 17 years at the event that he helped to start up.

He says that without the vehicle alongside his stall he will not be able to continue supporting the event.

At a recent Oswestry Town Council meeting, clerk to the council, David Preston, said that talks were ongoing between the council, which runs the outdoor and indoor markets, and Shropshire Council, responsible for enforcing traffic regulations.

"We are hoping to reach an agreement that will be suited for each party," Mr Preston said.

The next artisan market will be held tomorrow (Friday).

Rider Rachel misses her day on the red carpet



Top athletes such as Usain Bolt did attend the glittering sports awards ceremony

SHE had the chance to rub shoulders with the likes of Usain Bolt and Hugh Grant, among celebrities from the worlds of entertainment, fashion and sport.

But an athlete from the Shropshire and Mid Wales border missed out on her chance to walk the red carpet because she was too busy training.

Rachel Atherton has topped off her perfect season winning the top prize in a ceremony known as the sporting Oscars. The 29-year-old

mountain-biker is the 2017 Laureus World Action Sportsperson of the Year, the first person from her sport to pick up the title.

That puts her alongside the great and the good of world sport, with other winners including world record-holding Jamaican sprinter Bolt, swimmer Michael Phelps and US gymnast Simone Biles.

Rachel credits the surroundings and training facilities in the Shropshire borders for a large part of her success.



Dedicated Rachel Atherton is training in America and missed the awards

The family moved to Llanrhedr, near Oswestry, 18 years ago, and Rachel said the local facilities have been a great help to her and her brothers Dan and Gee.

The ace, a former Oswestry Marches School pupil, has now chalked up 33 World Cup series wins in all – and her success at the Laureus Awards places her in a global sporting spotlight.

"I can't quite believe this is real and I am so delighted that my success this season and the sport of downhill mountain-biking as a whole has been recognised in the wider world of sport."

work with coach Nick Grantham at the team's training camp in California.

She said: "I was gutted not to be able to make the ceremony; we looked at every available flight, about 100 different sets of scheduling but we just couldn't make it work.

"I am so delighted that my success this season and the sport of downhill mountain-biking as a whole has been recognised in the wider world of sport."

Uri is truly extraordinary, says ironworks boss Clive



Uri Geller found fame and celebrity through his amazing skills



Uri Geller tries out his skills at the British Ironwork Centre near Oswestry

Report by Sue Austin

HE'S been accused of bending the truth – but Uri Geller has been backed by an Oswestry businessman who said he had seen for himself his "extraordinary abilities".

The psychic has been widely ridiculed after claiming US Government scientists tested him to see if his mind could "get a nuclear weapon going".

Geller said he was subjected to a series of experiments at an American federal research facility in Livermore, California, which designed and maintains a series of nuclear warheads.

The information was met with incredulity from experts.

But businessman Clive Knowles has insisted he had seen for himself the power of Geller's mind when he visited the British Ironwork Centre near Oswestry to unveil a huge gorilla sculpture made from spoons.

He has had a close connection to the celebrity psychic, also supplying him with a bended street lamp for his Berkshire home.

"When Uri came to visit us in 2014 he actually bent a spoon in front of my eyes, at close range. It could not have been a trick, I was looking all the time for any sleight of hand," he said. "He went on to bend more spoons for visitors that day and he also drew pictures of things that members of my own family were thinking. It was extraordinary. He definitely has an extraordinary mind. He thinks of solutions to problems that none of us could even dream of." Geller commissioned the gorilla sculpture, which was to have been sited in the garden of his British home. But he has since returned to his Israeli homeland and the sculpture remains at the ironwork centre.



Clive Knowles and Uri Geller with a bent lamppost



Uri Geller, Robert Bland and Alan Clarke admire the gorilla sculpture

Volunteers are needed to care for waterways

VOLUNTEERS are being sought to help care for the region's waterways.

The Canal & River Trust's North Wales & Borders Waterway has launched a search for up to five new members to join its partnership in Powys, Shropshire, Cheshire, Denbighshire and Staffordshire.

Sitting alongside the trust's local waterway management team, the voluntary partnership plays an important role in providing direction for the area's canals and navigable river.

The aim of the partnership is to give local people a voice in the development of their local waterways so they can help shape plans, guide the trust's spending decisions, develop local engagement and external funding, and champion the interests of the waterways.

The North Wales & Borders Waterway is responsible for six contrasting waterways and two magnificent visitor attractions. These include the wildlife havens of the Montgomery and Shropshire Union Canals, the Llangollen Canal, the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, the Anderton Boat Lift, and the River Weaver. The waterway stretches from Ellesmere Port to Wolverhampton, Runcorn to Winsford, Llangollen to Nantwich and Frankton to Newtown in Powys.

Brenda Harvey, partnership chair, said: "Our area boasts some of the UK's quietest and busiest stretches of the 2,000 mile canal network and some of its greatest treasures.

"We are looking for candidates who are team players, able to engage and inspire, including talking to community groups and businesses, at public meetings, and with the media.

For more information, visit www.canalrivertrust.org.uk

Waste material warning given

FARMERS and landowners could be targeted by criminal groups who are looking for land to illegally store a combustible type of waste, the Powys Community Safety Partnership has warned.

The partnership is now urging the farming community and landowners to remain vigilant after farmers have discovered bales placed on their land that contain refuse derived fuel (RDF). The bales have been stored on land without permission.

RDF is produced by shredding and dehydrating solid waste. It consists largely of combustible components of municipal solid waste such as plastics and biodegradable waste.

Its storage, export and uses must be done in accordance with tight regulations, imposed by Natural Resources Wales, due to the risk of inappropriate disposal and the risk of fire and pollution of stored incorrectly. An environmental permit is required in order to store the waste legally.

The partnership is also urging anyone who is offered money to store RDF on their land to reject any approach and report it to Natural Resources Wales or Dyfed Powys Police.

Reports should be made to Natural Resources Wales on their incident hotline on 0300 807060.

Officers target thefts from vans

DYFED-POWYS Police is working with other police forces to crack down on thefts from vans.

Over the last few months there has been an increase in reports of vans being broken into across Powys and personal items including power tools being stolen.

A spokesperson for Dyfed-Powys Police said: "This is a national problem and Dyfed-Powys Police are working with other forces and in collaboration with partner agencies as necessary.

"Our focus is on investigating incidents thoroughly and expeditiously in an effort to bring offenders to justice, and also ensuring we are conducting proactive operations in vulnerable areas and patrolling our county borders effectively."

Many reports have been in relation to tools being stolen from trade vehicles, which, in turn has had an effect on the owners who need them in the course of their employment. Police are urging anyone who drives a van to ensure they lock and alarm their vehicles.

Author thanks teachers for inspiring her to write



Author Emily Williams attended Gobowen Primary School and Rhyn Park School

A FIRST-time author has credited her Shropshire school teachers with encouraging her love of writing after publishing her debut novel.

Former Gobowen Primary School and Rhyn Park School student Emily Williams took more

than four years to write her book *Letters to Eloise*.

She said: "I am very grateful for the teachers in both schools in Shropshire for developing my interest in writing, which has led me to where I am today. Particular primary school teachers



Letters to Eloise is Emily Williams's first novel and is available now

Mrs Field and Mrs Dyke were notably inspirational for me. I still have a bound book that I wrote from Mrs Dyke's year 6 class, almost 25 years ago.

"The novel took over four years to write, mainly due to having two children just after

finishing the first draft." *Letters to Eloise* is a story about post-graduate student Flora, who falls unexpectedly pregnant during her final year studies.

It has been released as a paperback and as a Kindle ebook on through Lutino Publications.

West End star puts group members through their paces



Talented Face2Face members show off their performance skills



There's plenty of smiles as Kane Oliver Parry shares his knowledge with Face2Face members

Report by Naomi Penrose

SIXTY talented Face2Face Performance Academy students were visited by professional performer and West End star, Kane Oliver Parry.

This musical theatre star taught students the musical number One Short Day from the hugely successful *Wicked*, a show he has performed in the West End.

Working as an ensemble, performers kicked off the session with group focused drama activities. They moved swiftly into learning the routine and tackling the vocal intricacies of the song, excelling in all disciplines.

The star was impressed with the students, saying: "They were fully focused and committed to what they were doing in the workshop and by the end of the session they were singing, dancing and acting with conviction."

"I wish I was part of something like Face2Face when I was their age. I am amazed by the standard of talent at Face2Face, it is clear that they are learning all the right skills here."

The Face2Face Performance Academy prides itself on its connections to the entertainment industry boasting an impressive list of famed patrons including Charlie Brooks, former Eastenders actress, and Sheila Reid, known most recently for her role as Madge Harvey in *Benidorm*.

Face2Face runs every Friday evening from 6pm to 8.30pm at Moreton Hall School near Oswestry. For more information about this new performance academy, contact Imogen Davies at daviesim@moretonhall.com, call (01691) 773671 or visit the website at moretonhall.org/face2face.



Kane Oliver Parry works with the group members



Face2Face group members are given hints on improving their performances

Gardens should be seen as small nature reserves

AMONGST the short list of 'things to do' in the garden at this time of the year (if you're hardy enough) is planting trees, shrubs and hedges and pruning those that are existing, spreading compost or bark around them and basically preparing for the growing season.

I'd like to change the status quo of gardens.

It's important to think of them not as manicured, grassy rectangles, but (much more excitingly) as our own private nature reserves; and there's a lot one can do to improve that image throughout the year.

One of the best ways to make a real difference to local wildlife is to make a pond or wetland. This will not just benefit various aquatic insects which will take surprisingly quickly to a new patch of water, but also to their predators – amphibians, larger invertebrates like dragonflies and various birds that can feed off them. Of course, having an area of water in your garden during this time of the year is important as a hydration source for both birds and mammals and an excellent added attractor.

Outside our gardens, water is also a good place to head in January and February. The aforementioned frogs and toads begin their migrations to their spawning areas and spawn begins to fill the margins. On larger bodies of water, you may also see the fascinating courtship dance of the great crested grebe.

A number of phases of the courtship are recognized: 'advertising', 'discovery ceremony', 'headshaking', 'penguin dance', 'the retreat', 'fish offering', 'inviting' and the climax, so to speak.

ON THE WILDSIDE

with Ben Waddams



But as large and impressive as the beautiful great crested grebe is, there is a much bigger bird with which this time of the year is important; the heron.

Her courtship activity really begins in the next couple of weeks and if you know of a local heronry close to you, it's a great place to go and watch them perform. In the male's courtship dance he stretches his neck up and then lowers it over his back, with his prominent bill signalling pointing upwards.

A dearth of vegetation now, allows us some hope of spotting the ever-elusive British mammal – any species. Our resident wild dogs can look resplendent at this time of the year but we also welcome the return above ground of the badger.

Their presence is indicated above ground towards the start of February as old winter bedding begins to appear outside sets. This will be pushed away to be replaced by fresh bedding, in anticipation of the arrival of the new year's young.

Badgers are crepuscular and nocturnal in their habits. Although their sense of smell is acute, their eyesight is monochromatic – only moving objects attract their attention. Their hearing is no higher than that of humans.

Therefore your best chance of seeing badgers is at the end of a warmer-day-than-usual, to remain still, downwind, and to be quiet. Good luck.

Ben's artwork can be seen at The Art Vaults, Fish St, Shrewsbury



Mr Badger – acrylic on board – by Ben Waddams

There's a 'slot' to do before launch of new £1 coin

IT will be the most advanced coin Britain has ever seen – but the new £1 is providing a headache for shops, councils and vending machine companies everywhere.

The new 12-sided coin enters circulation within the next two months.

That means there is a race against time to ensure the machines we take for granted are ready for the switch.

The new coin, designed by teenager David Pearce from Walsall in the West Midlands, will enter circulation on March 28, and by October 15 the traditional round coin will cease to be legal tender.

With so little time to ensure parking machines, trolleys and ticket vendors can take the oddly shaped currency, groups across the county are leaping into action to prevent mayhem when the switch is finally made.

The change affects a wide range of organisations, from council and hospital car parks to pub vending machines and supermarket trolleys.

Councils in Shropshire say they cannot give a cost to the work needed to make the changes, although Plymouth Council in Devon says it has put aside £32,000.

Simon Jones, Shropshire Council's Cabinet member for highways and transportation, said: "Shropshire Council is working closely with the suppliers of our parking equipment to put the necessary software and equipment upgrades in place for the new 12-sided £1 coin, which will enter circulation on March 28.

"The round £1 will be legal tender alongside the new, more-secure coin until October 15.

"We are working on the programming for the installation. Both the council and our suppliers will aim to minimise any disruption to our customers."

Bosses at Telford Central railway station, run by London Midland, have been planning to upgrade their machines so that they are compatible with the new £1 coin since the release of the updated £5 note.

Francis Thomas, a spokesman for the company, said: "We are not expecting any problems with our ticket vending machines when the new coins are introduced later this year. We have been liaising with our machine suppliers since the plastic £5 notes were introduced to prepare for the new coins."

Arriva Trains Wales, which runs Shrewsbury train station, says plans to update machines for the new £1 coin are already in hand. Claire Lillie, an Arriva spokeswoman, said: "Our retail team are aware that the new £1 will soon be in circulation and all our ticket vending machines will be calibrated accordingly."



Entertainment unleashed

nativemonster.com

The new entertainment website for the West Midlands

NATIVE MONSTER
Entertainment Unleashed

Cinema listings

20TH CENTURY WOMEN (15)



Girl power – 7/10
Bohemian mom Dorothea Fields (Annette Bening) gave birth to her teenage son Jamie (Lucas Jade Zumann) when she was 40. They share a ramshackle home in Santa Barbara with New Wave photographer Abbie Porter (Greta Gerwig), handyman William (Billy Crudup) and waif Julie (Elle Fanning). Dorothea entreats Abbie and Julie to help her shepherd Jamie to adulthood.

FIFTY SHADES DARKER (18)



Limp effort – 4/10
Anastasia (Dakota Johnson) has tried to turn her back on Christian (Jamie Dornan) and she throws herself into her work. But Ana crosses paths with Christian again and tensions heighten when she finally meets Elena Lincoln (Kim Basinger), the woman who introduced Christian to his secret world of whips and chains.

THE SPACE BETWEEN US (PG)



Space race – 6/10
Charismatic billionaire Nathaniel Shepherd (Gary Oldman) is determined to establish a colony on Mars called East Texas. This expedition to the red planet is led by astronaut Sarah Elliot (Janet Montgomery), who discovers during the mission she is pregnant. She dies during childbirth and her son, Gardner (Asa Butterfield), is raised by the scientists at East Texas.

BILLY LYNN'S LONG HALF-TIME WALK (15)



War games – 7/10
Two-time Oscar-winning director Ang Lee heads this wartime drama. 19-year-old Army specialist Billy Lynn (Joe Alwyn) becomes a hero to his entire country. During a tour of duty in Iraq, Billy is caught on camera dragging Sergeant Virgil Bremer (Vin Diesel) to safety and the footage goes viral. Back home, Billy and fellow members of Bravo Company are feted as heroes.

PREVENE (15)



Baby boom – 7/10
Alice Lowe, co-writer and co-star of Ben Wheatley's *Sightseers*, makes an auspicious directorial debut with this dark and twisted comedy thriller about a murderer mother-to-be. Ruth (Lowe) is with child, a daughter who speaks to her from the womb and compels her to carry out dastardly deeds. She targets the owner of a pet store (Dan Renton Skinner) and a sleazy pub DJ

LOVING (12A)



Boundless love – 8/10
Construction worker Richard Loving (Joel Edgerton) falls giddily in love with family friend Mildred Jeter (Ruth Negga). Richard and Mildred drive to Washington D.C. and return home with a marriage licence. Sheriff Brooks (Marton Csokas) arrives soon after and arrests them. The case eventually attracts the interest of American Civil Liberties Union lawyer Bernie Cohen (Nick Kroll).



Washington and Viola Davis starred in the stage version of the story



Troy's beliefs drive a wedge between him and his sons

Smooth jump to screen

Review by Damon Smith

NOMINATED for four Academy Awards including Best Picture, *Fences* is an assured film adaptation of August Wilson's Pulitzer Prize-winning play, directed for the screen by and starring Denzel Washington.

The actor already has two golden statuettes on his mantelpiece for the films *Glory* and *Training Day*, and he is vying for a third Oscar for his showy performance here.

Such plaudits come as little surprise since Washington is well acquainted with the stage production. He simmered with tightly coiled rage in a 2010 Broadway revival co-starring Viola Davis.

Both won coveted Tony Awards for their incendiary portrayals of a couple struggling to hold together their marriage against a backdrop of economic uncertainty and bigotry in 1950s Pittsburgh.

Reunited on the big screen, Washington and Davis rekindle molten chemistry and are able to suck us deeper into their characters' suffering with the benefit of lingering, tear-stained close-ups.

Fences remains unerringly faithful to its stage origins and feels rather static, unfolding predominantly within the rooms or backyard of a modest home where family members trade bruising verbal blows.

Strong-willed patriarch Troy Maxson (Washington) presides over this tug-of-war for supremacy.

He works as a rubbish collector alongside best friend Jim (Stephen McKinley Henderson), who loves to listen to Troy's anecdotes.

Troy toils in order to provide for his wife Rose (Davis) and their son Cory (Jovan



Denzel Washington plays Troy Maxson, who loves telling anecdotes to pal Jim Bono – Stephen McKinley Henderson

Adepo). The young man is a gifted athlete and is being scouted for college football.

Troy refuses to sign his son's permission slip because he believes the football leagues are rife with racial prejudice and he doesn't want his flesh and blood to fail, as he did playing baseball many years before.

This refusal to support his son's dream drives an insurmountable wedge between Troy and Cory. "I'm the boss around here. I

do the only saying what counts," barks the old man defiantly.

Meanwhile, the patriarch clashes with his other son, Lyons (Russell Hornsby), who only seems to materialise when he needs money.

Financial pressures tip Troy over the edge and his rage and frustration explode with devastating consequences.

Fences is a glittering showcase for the

ensemble cast, led by the imperious Washington and Davis, who don't hold back in pivotal scenes.

The latter richly deserves her Oscar nomination, and she'll almost certainly win for deftly capturing the steeliness of a mother hen, who has sacrificed everything for her brood.

Period detail is impressive, with plenty of dialogue-driven fireworks.

Book reviews

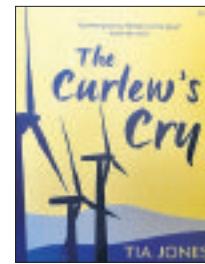
THE CURLEW'S CRY

By Tia Jones
Published by Gomer

This is a wonderful blend of fast-moving story and beautifully described landscape. Though it is the third in a trilogy, it is a good stand-alone read.

The very evocative series deals with the daily life and dramatic happenings of the Davies family of Llanfenni. In this latest book by Mid Wales author Tia Jones, a dramatic rescue from stormy seas on the shore of west Wales sets the scene.

Bethan and her daughter Clare have been snatched from the clutches of her abu-



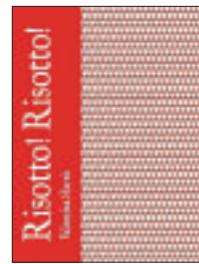
sive Irish husband by her brother Richard and friend Tegwyn and only just avoid tragedy at sea. Though life settles down for a traumatised Bethan on the family farm, it doesn't stand still.

By Deborah Knox

RISOTTO! RISOTTO!

By Valentina Harris
Published by Absolute Press

Few dishes are more comforting than a rich, creamy risotto, the endlessly variable Italian rice dish that is both easy to make and difficult to perfect. Anglo-Italian cook Valentina Harris has updated her go-to-guide for risotto enthusiasts with new recipes, ranging from humble vegetable variations to dishes featuring seafood (including the famous black risotto made with squid ink), the much-prized truffle and even sweet risottos, such as Champagne.



This handsome hardback, which could become a kitchen standby, also contains a potted history of rice cultivation in Italy. There are even tips on how to eat this popular dish.

By Leon Burakowski

WE COME APART

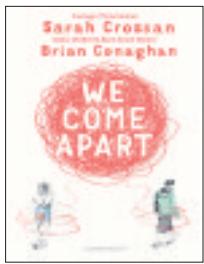
By Sarah Crossan and Brian Conaghan
Published by Bloomsbury Childrens

From a quick flick, *We Come Apart*, looks like a book of poetry.

But start reading from the very beginning and it soon becomes apparent each standalone poem is telling the story of two characters: Jess and Nicu – and an impossible relationship.

It's a searingly honest and heart-wrenching Romeo & Juliet (and Grease) for the post-Brexit age.

Sarah Crossan and Brian Conaghan, both lauded for their previ-



ous work, have come together to take an extraordinary snapshot of modern Britain from the viewpoint of its dispossessed children. It's a clarion call for us all to do something about it.

By Kate Whiting



Greg Davies recently appeared in the TV show *Who Do You Think You Are?*



Comic Joe Lycett will join Greg Davies in the gala show line-up

Greg lined up to have a laugh back home

COMEDIAN and actor Greg Davies is to appear at the first ever Shrewsbury International Comedy Festival.

The Shropshire-raised comedian, who has appeared in a string of TV shows and is one of the country's most sought after comics, will be hosting the festival's Gala Show, just weeks before his sell-out five day residency at Theatre Severn.

The main body of the festival, strategically timed to provide top circuit acts with opportunities for last minute previews for their Edinburgh Fringe Festival shows, will contain 15, hour-long performances at town centre venues over three days, starting on July 21. The Old Market Hall in The Square, St Nicholas Bar and Café on Castle Street and The Old Post Office on Milk Street, have all been selected to showcase the quirky, festival-friendly nature of Shrewsbury. On July 23 in Theatre Severn's main auditorium, Greg Davies will host a three hour show to close the festival – containing a line-up that is described by the organisers as 'a whole series of Live at the Apollo squeezed into one night'.

Shrewsbury International Comedy Festival is the brainchild of Kevin Bland and Beth McGowan. Kevin is a former stand-up comedian who has promoted comedy in Shropshire and beyond for over a decade. Beth holds nearly 20 years' experience in sound production and event management. Kevin said: "This is something Beth and I have talked about for a while, but we couldn't have got it off the ground without the enthusiasm and support of the venues.

"Securing someone of Greg Davies's calibre for our inaugural event is fantastic. His schedule is ridiculously busy next year as he tours his new show and obviously local fans will be able to watch his warm-up shows at Theatre Severn in September. Whereas they are work in progress performances on a set theme, this is an opportunity to see Greg 'back on the tools' as it were. Before all the TV and film success, he was the best compere in the business and we're really excited he has agreed to perform."

Comic Joe Lycett will join Greg in the gala show line-up. Joe's recent run-ins with parking attendants as recounted on 8 out



Greg Davies will return to the county of his childhood for the comedy festival

Sell-out show was a real theatrical treat for Trefonen



John Buckeridge in *The Forgotten Tales*

Theatre lovers who managed to get a ticket for the sell-out show *The Forgotten Tales* at the Trefonen Village Hall were treated to an outstanding one man show.

John Buckeridge, founder of Parable Arts and formerly of Trefonen, took us on a journey through the tales and legends of Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales.

Using song and extremely clever

physical theatre, Jon showed us monsters and magic, damsels and deceit.

Having researched and written each tale, Jon brought them and their characters to life with comedy and pathos.

Underlying the stories were themes of honesty, courage and a belief in the power of diversity.

The packed hall made up of Trefonenites and visitors from further afield were delighted by having such high quality theatre available locally.

"Of course, I taught him all he knows!" laughed Rachel Higgins, one of Jon's former teachers at St Martins School, who had come to support their local lad made good.

Val Smout, who organised the

show, put on by Trefonen Entertains, a group of local volunteers, said:

"We try to have a variety of films, live theatre and musical events."

"I absolutely loved the show and am so proud to think that Jon, an Edinburgh Fringe regular, has come home to entertain us so well this evening."

You can catch this unique and extremely professional show at The Willow Gallery, Oswestry, on April 7 – highly recommended!

Tickets for *The Forgotten Tales* at the Willow Gallery are available from willowgallerystoweswery.org or by calling (01691) 657575.

Review by Victoria Gemmell

DVD releases

Free State Of Jones (Cert 15)



Newt (Matthew McConaughey) confronts Lt. Barbour

Starring: Keri Russell, Matthew McConaughey, Gugu Mbatha-Raw
Running time: 139 mins
Director: Gary Ross

6/10

In October 1862, farmer Newton Knight (Matthew McConaughey) is serving as a medic in the Confederate Army and witnesses a local boy being shot on the front line.

Horrified by this senseless loss of an innocent life, Newton abandons his post and returns home to Jones County with the boy's body to perform a proper burial. The threat of capture as a deserter exerts intolerable strain on his relationship with his wife Serena (Keri Russell) and Newton eventually flees into nearby swamps, where he befriends runaway slaves including Rachel (Gugu Mbatha-Raw) and Moses (Mahershala Ali). They live quietly off the land, hoping not to draw the attention of sadistic Lieutenant Barbour (Brad Carter) and his soldiers. *Free State Of Jones* is a handsome historical drama, which fictionalises a bruising five-year period during the American Civil War when the real-life Knight led a platoon of deserters against the Confederacy and controversially aligned himself with slaves to establish a mixed race community in Mississippi. McConaughey delivers his character's speeches with gravitas and tear-stained cheeks, and catalyses molten on-screen chemistry with Mbatha-Raw.

However, Gary Ross' film is a slog and pacing errs towards the pedestrian, even in sporadic battle sequences. It certainly doesn't help that the writer-director chooses to bookmark his history lesson with flash forwards to a courtroom battle several decades after the end of the war involving Knight's great-great-grandson.

Jack Reacher: Never Go Back (12)



Tom Cruise plays Jack Reacher in *Never Go Back*

Starring: Tom Cruise, Cobie Smulders, Danika Yarosh, Holt McCallany, Patrick Heusinger.
Running time: 119 mins

6/10

Jack Reacher (Tom Cruise), a former Major in the Military Police Corps, is living off the grid, embracing a nomadic lifestyle.

En route to a face-to-face meeting with his successor, Major Susan Turner (Cobie Smulders), Reacher discovers she has been accused of espionage. "She's been arrested, court-martial is pending," growls Turner's replacement, Colonel Morgan (Holt McCallany), who is suspiciously obstructive. When associates of Turner are slain before they can testify, Reacher realises he has stumbled upon a wider conspiracy involving overseas shipments of weaponry. Against the odds, Reacher springs Turner from her high-security holding cell so they can expose corruption within the army ranks. However, a tenacious assassin called The Hunter (Patrick Heusinger) is on their trail, and he intends to eliminate everyone close to Reacher, including a smart-talking teenager called Samantha (Danika Yarosh), who could be his daughter from a previous relationship. Based on the book by Lee Child, *Jack Reacher: Never Go Back* is a solid, reliable, polished and compact thriller that simmers pleasantly thanks to the on-screen chemistry between Cruise and Smulders. The latter rolls up her sleeves to inflict bruises in the accomplished action set pieces.



Casualty

8.25pm

Steph, the woman responsible for Grace's hospitalisation, is rushed into the ER after attempting suicide. The staff face an upward struggle in finding out what pills she has taken, one which is made all the more difficult by the patient's refusal to speak – and the cold disdain of both Connie and Jacob.



Grand Tours of the Scottish Islands

7.30pm

Paul Murton journeys around the coast of the Long Island of Harris and Lewis, beginning on Scarp, travelling north to Great Bernera. These islands may seem to exist in the shadow of their larger neighbours, but Paul discovers they have an identity all of their own.



The Voice UK

8.30pm

Emma Willis hosts as the spinning-chair talent contest moves beyond the genial business of the Blind Auditions into the more cutthroat competition of the Battle phase. Coaches Tom Jones, Will.i.am, Gavin Rossdale and Jennifer Hudson are called upon to begin whittling down their roster of would-be stars.



Great Canal Journeys

8pm

Timothy West and Prunella Scales venture into the open sea as they make their way through the islands of Scotland's coast. Their destination is the rarely used nine-mile Crinan canal on the Mull of Kintyre, described as the world's most beautiful shortcut.



NCIS

8pm

DiNozzo is reunited with his old flame Jeannie Benoit, when insurgents in Sudan attack a group of volunteer doctors, including her husband. Travelling to the crime scene to conduct a joint murder-kidnapping investigation, Dinozzo and McGee offer their assistance.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast.
 10.00 Saturday Kitchen Live. Michel Roux Jr serves as the host, as explorer Levison Wood joins him the studio, while chefs Carl Clarke and Niklas Ekstedt take up residence in the kitchen.
 11.30 The Little Paris Kitchen: Cooking with Rachel Khoo. A Parisian baker helps Rachel make baguettes. (R)
 12.00 Football Focus. Dan Walker and guests look ahead to forthcoming fixtures, including Chelsea v Swansea City in the Premier League and Manchester United v Southampton in the EFL Cup final.
 1.00 BBC News; Weather.
 1.15 Bargain Hunt. Tim Wonnacott joins experts Anita Manning and Christina Trevanion at the Ardingly antiques fair in West Sussex, as two teams of contestants search for collectibles. (R)
 2.00 Live Six Nations Rugby Union. Scotland v Wales (Kick-off 2.25pm). John Inverdale presents coverage of the third match of this year's tournament for both sides, which takes place at Murrayfield.
 4.30 Final Score. A round-up of this afternoon's football results.
 BBC News.
 5.20 Midlands Today; Weather.
 5.30 Celebrity Mastermind. With Louise Pentland, Jason Cook, Alistair Appleton and Ben Shires. (R)
 6.00 Pointless Celebrities. Toby Anstis and Jenni Falconer, Janice Long and Bob Harris, Peter White and Steve Punt, and Angie Greaves and Steve Punt take part in the unorthodox general knowledge quiz. (R)
 6.45 Let It Shine: Live Final. The finalists take to the stage one last time in the hope of winning the starring roles in Gary Barlow's new musical. Hosted by Graham Norton and Mel Giedroyc. Last in the series.
 8.25 Casualty. Steph is rushed to hospital when she tries to kill herself, and Connie refuses to treat her. Meanwhile, Iain helps Gem to get a job at the hospital coffee shop.
 9.15 Taboo. James Delaney confronts Sir Stuart Strange with the cold, hard truth, and plans his escape. However, the Crown has one final, deadly move to make. Last in the series.
 10.15 BBC News; Weather; National Lottery Update.
 10.30 Match of the Day. Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches, including Chelsea v Swansea City at Stamford Bridge and Hull City v Burnley at the KCOM Stadium.
 11.50 This Country. The mockumentary continues as Kerry and Kurtan await the release of their uncle, Steve "Nugget" Nuggins, who they believe was wrongfully imprisoned for "having a laugh".
 12.15 FILM: Return from the River Kwai (1988). Second World War drama sequel, starring Chris Penn and Edward Fox.
 1.50 Weather for the Week Ahead.
 1.55 BBC News.

BBC2

6.30 FILM: They Flew Alone (1942). Fact-based drama, starring Anna Neagle.
 8.10 FILM: In Which We Serve (1942). Second World War drama, starring Noel Coward.
 10.00 Britain's Secret Seas. The excavation of a 17th-century ship off the Dorset coast. Last in the series. (R)
 11.00 Homes Under the Hammer. The team assess properties in Newcastle, Leyton and Gainsborough. (R)
 12.00 Two Greedy Italians: Still Hungry. Antonio Carluccio and Gennaro Contaldo return to Italy. (R)
 1.00 FILM: Waterloo (1970). Historical drama, starring Rod Steiger.
 3.10 Natural World. The lives of gyrfalcons and wolves in the Arctic. (R)
 4.00 Mastermind. Five more semi-finalists compete for a place in the final. (R)
 4.30 University Challenge. The quarter-final matches continue. (R)
 5.00 Only Connect. The Surrealists take on the Korfballers in a quarter-final match. (R)
 5.30 The House That £100K Built. Kieran Long and Piers Taylor help a couple in Co Antrim, Northern Ireland. (R)
 6.30 Flog It! Will Aixon and Michael Baggott value items in Ashbourne, Derbyshire, including a pearlware cow and an Asprey and Co picnic set, while Paul Martin experiences harness racing. (R)
 7.30 Grand Tours of the Scottish Islands. Paul Murton journeys around the coast of the Long Island of Harris and Lewis, beginning on Scarp, travelling north to Great Bernera, then south east to Scalpay.
 8.00 Diana: Designing a Princess. Brenda Emmanuel explores the stories behind some of the most exquisite dresses owned by Diana, Princess of Wales, some of which are on display in an exhibition at Kensington Palace.
 8.30 Dad's Army. An invasion alert throws Mainwaring's hopeless would-be heroes into a panic, leading one half of the platoon to launch an attack on the other. (R)
 9.00 FILM: My Old Lady (2014). Premiere. A penniless New Yorker hopes to sell his dead father's flat in Paris, but finds it has an eccentric, elderly tenant. Comedy drama, starring Maggie Smith and Kevin Kline.
 10.45 QI XL. Stephen Fry hosts an extended version of the quiz with a difference, with guests Matt Lucas, Lucy Porter and Ross Noble joining regular panelist Alan Davies.
 11.30 FILM: Albert Nobbs (2011). A woman living in disguise as a man in 19th-century Ireland decides to find a wife after a meeting with a fellow cross-dresser. Drama, with Glenn Close and Mia Wasikowska.
 1.15 FILM: Youth Without Youth (2007). An academic whose youth is restored after being struck by lightning goes round the world on a decades-long journey of discovery. Drama, starring Tim Roth and Alexandra Maria Lara.
 3.15 This Is BBC2. Preview of upcoming programmes from BBC2.

ITV

6.00 CITV: The Aquabats! Super Show! 6.25 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures 6.35 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures 6.45 Sooty 6.55 Signed Stories: Share a Story 7.00 Oddballs 7.05 Thunderbirds Are Go
 7.30 Scrambled!: Scrambled! Two hours of children's fun.
 7.35 Scrambled!: Mr Bean: The Animated Series. The hapless halfwit finds a treasure map. (R)
 7.50 Scrambled!: Horrid Henry. Cartoon about a mischievous youngster. (R)
 8.10 Scrambled!: Teen Titans Go! The teenage superheroes fight to save the world. (R)
 8.30 Scrambled!: Bear Grylls Survival School. A fierce storm forces the survival school pupils to evacuate their camp.
 9.05 Scrambled!: Adventure Time. Fun for children. (R)
 9.25 ITV News.
 9.30 Alphabetical. Quiz, hosted by Jeff Stelling. (R)
 10.25 Guess This House. Property game show, hosted by Saira Khan. (R)
 11.25 Off Their Rockers. Louis Walsh is the victim of a prank. (R)
 11.55 ITV News and Weather; Weather.
 12.00 FILM: Free Willy 2: The Adventure Home (1995). Family adventure, starring Jason James Richter.
 1.50 Tipping Point. Game show, hosted by Ben Shephard. (R)
 2.50 The Chase. Quiz show, hosted by Bradley Walsh. (R)
 3.50 ITV News Central; Weather.
 4.00 ITV News and Weather.
 4.15 Live Six Nations Rugby Union. Ireland v France (Kick-off 4.50pm). Coverage of the match from the third round of fixtures, which takes place at Aviva Stadium in Dublin.
 7.00 Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway. New series. The presenter duo's weekend variety show returns, with Gogglebox star and I'm A Celebrity 2016 winner Scarlett Moffatt joining Ant and Dec as their new co-host.
 8.30 The Voice UK. The talent contest moves into the Battle phase, in which Tom Jones, Will.i.am, Gavin Rossdale and Jennifer Hudson are expected to shape their protégés into their pop icons.
 10.30 ITV News and Weather.
 10.45 FILM: The Boat That Rocked (2009). An offshore pirate-radio station entertains 1960s Britain, but the authorities are determined to shut it down. Richard Curtis's comedy, with Bill Nighy and Philip Seymour Hoffman.
 1.10 Jackpot247. Viewers get the chance to participate in live interactive gaming from the comfort of their sofas, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team.
 3.00 Who's Doing the Dishes? Toyah Willcox hosts a dinner party for four guests who will win a cash prize if they can guess her identity from cryptic culinary clues. (R)
 3.50 ITV Nightscreen. Text-based information service.

Channel 4

6.20 Mobil 1 The Grid.
 6.45 The King of Queens. (R)
 7.10 The King of Queens. (R)
 7.35 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R)
 8.00 Everybody Loves Raymond. Ray tries to bribe Debra. (R)
 8.30 Frasier. Roz takes up the piano. (R)
 9.00 Frasier. The shrink celebrates his 2,000th radio broadcast. (R)
 9.30 The Big Bang Theory. Leonard and Sheldon go through an adjustment period. (R)
 10.00 The Big Bang Theory. The friends compete in a scavenger hunt. (R)
 10.30 The Big Bang Theory. (R)
 11.00 The Simpsons. (R)
 11.30 The Simpsons. (R)
 12.00 Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast. Jamie Oliver and Jimmy Doherty are joined by guest John Bishop. (R)
 1.00 Come Dine with Me. The first of a week of dinner parties in Devon. (R)
 1.30 Come Dine with Me. The second dinner party in Devon is hosted by funeral director Simon. (R)
 2.00 Come Dine with Me. Body artist Pascale hosts the third night in Devon. (R)
 2.30 Come Dine with Me. Nick hosts the fourth night in Devon. (R)
 3.00 Come Dine with Me. Ajay plans a nautical-themed evening for the final party in Devon. (R)
 3.30 A Place in the Sun: Summer Sun. A couple from Stockport search for a holiday home on Spain's Costa Calida. (R)
 4.30 Location, Location, Location. House-hunting in Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire. (R)
 5.35 Grand Designs. A couple build a unique family house in the rural hills of Pembrokeshire. (R)
 6.30 Channel 4 News.
 7.00 Penelope Keith's Favourite Villages. The actress travels around Britain, visiting villages in different parts of the country and discovering how people's attitudes have changed to these small communities. (R)
 8.00 Great Canal Journeys. Timothy West and Prunella Scales venture into the open sea as they make their way through the islands of Scotland's coast, and on to the rarely used Crinan canal. (R)
 9.00 FILM: Dawn of the Planet of the Apes (2014). Premiere. The leader of a colony of intelligent apes tries to prevent his tribe going to war against the human race. Sci-fi thriller sequel, starring Andy Serkis and Jason Clarke.
 11.35 FILM: Surrogates (2009). An FBI agent in a future where people only interact through robot doubles ventures into the real world to catch a killer. Sci-fi thriller, with Bruce Willis and Radha Mitchell.
 1.15 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. (R)
 2.05 Hollyoaks.
 4.15 Kirstie's Fill Your House for Free. (R)
 4.25 Phil Spencer: Secret Agent. (R)
 5.20 Fifteen to One. (R)

Channel 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig 6.05 Peppa Pig 6.10 Milkshake! Monkey 6.15 Milkshake! Bop Box 6.20 Paw Patrol 6.30 Bob the Builder 6.45 Fireman Sam 6.55 Rupert Bear 7.05 Olly the Little White Van 7.10 Wanda and the Alien 7.20 Angelina Ballerina 7.35 Little Princess 7.50 Paw Patrol 8.00 Blaze and the Monster Machines 8.25 Noddy: Toyland Detective 8.45 Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom 9.00 Shimmer and Shine 9.25 Peppa Pig 9.35 Peppa Pig 9.40 Peppa Pig 9.50 Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom 10.05 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R)
 10.40 Access.
 10.45 Police Interceptors Unleashed. (R)
 11.15 Police Interceptors. (R)
 12.15 Police Interceptors. Barry Peach outsmarts a disqualified driver. (R)
 1.15 Benefits Britain: Life on the Dole. People living on state welfare in Hull. (R)
 2.15 Benefits Britain: Life on the Dole. Roma people who moved to the UK. (R)
 3.15 The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. A dispute with a neighbour descends into violence. (R)
 4.15 The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. A York man gets an unexpected soaking after an argument. (R)
 5.15 Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords. (R)
 6.10 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R)
 7.05 NCIS: Los Angeles. The team hunts for an electromagnetic pulse device that was stolen from a college research facility, and could destroy Los Angeles, killing millions of people.
 8.00 NCIS. DiNozzo is reunited with his old flame, Jeanne Benoit, when insurgents in Sudan kidnap her doctor husband. Crime drama, guest starring Scottie Thompson.
 8.55 5 News Weekend.
 9.00 Football on 5: The Championship. George Riley and Lynsey Hipgrave introduce highlights from the weekend's Championship games, including Leeds United v Sheffield Wednesday in a huge Yorkshire derby at Elland Road.
 10.00 Football on 5: Goal Rush. George Riley and Lynsey Hipgrave introduce all the goals from the weekend's games in Leagues One and Two, including AFC Wimbledon v Walsall and Bristol Rovers v Scunthorpe United.
 10.30 Stealing the Mona Lisa. This episode looks back to 1911, when one of the most famous pieces of art across the globe, the Mona Lisa, was stolen from the Louvre museum in Paris.
 11.30 Police Interceptors Unleashed. Officers take on a crook who has devised a crafty scheme to get something for nothing, while PC Barry Peach is confronted by a foul-mouthed pensioner. (R)
 12.00 SuperCasino.
 3.10 That's So 1985. (R)
 4.00 Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun. (R)
 4.50 House Doctor. (R)
 5.15 Nick's Quest. (R)
 5.40 Angels of Jarm. (R)
 5.50 Roary the Racing Car. (R)


The Big Painting Challenge
6pm

Mariella Frostrup and Richard Coles bring the contestants to Whipsnade Zoo to paint the animals, giving them a chance to demonstrate their ability to capture a sense of a living creature. The first challenge involves flamingos, which have a body shape that is harder to depict than it seems.


Special Forces – Ultimate Hell Week
9pm

The remaining recruits arrive in France following the previous episode's shocking results. While the previous stages have presented the contestants with physical challenges, this section places them under psychological pressure.


Live Six Nations Rugby Union
2pm

England v Italy (Kick-off 3.00pm). Coverage of the match from the third round of fixtures, which takes place at Twickenham. Despite struggling to find their best form so far in this year's tournament, England remain the dominant force having won both of their opening encounters.


The Jump
6.30pm

The remaining contestants compete in two different disciplines. First, they face a speed ski challenge, the results of which will determine the line-up for the second event – the relatively new winter sport of ski cross, in which they will navigate a winding course of sprints, drops, rollers and banks.


The EFL Cup Final Highlights: Football on 5
8.15pm

Manchester United v Southampton. Action from the showpiece match, as Jose Mourinho's Red Devils met Claude Puel's Saints at Wembley Stadium. This was only Southampton's second-ever appearance in the final of this competition against the four-time winners.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast.
7.35 **Match of the Day.** Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches, including Chelsea v Swansea City at Stamford Bridge and Hull City v Burnley at the KCOM Stadium. (R)
9.00 **The Andrew Marr Show.**
10.00 **The Big Questions.** From Heartlands Academy, Birmingham.
11.00 **Sunday Politics West Midlands.** The week's events at Westminster, presented by Andrew Neil. Including a regional round-up.
12.15 **Bargain Hunt.** Two teams hunt for bargains in Newark, Nottinghamshire. (R)
1.00 **BBC News;** Weather.
1.15 **Homes Under the Hammer.** Properties in Cornwall, Surrey and Staffordshire. (R)
2.15 **Flog It!** From Richmond, North Yorkshire. (R)
3.15 **Escape to the Country.** Nicki Chapman helps a couple search for a retirement property in north Wales. (R)
4.00 **Songs of Praise.**
4.35 **Shop Well for Less?** Helping families change the way they shop. (R)
5.35 **BBC News.**
5.50 **Midlands Today;** Weather.
6.00 **The Big Painting Challenge.** Mariella Frostrup and Richard Coles bring the contestants to Whipsnade Zoo to paint flamingos, which prove harder to capture on canvas than they look, and elephants.
7.00 **Countryfile.** Matt Baker and Ellie Harrison present the show from the Isle of Man, taking a trip in a horse-drawn tram and exploring the ancient homesteads of the island's agricultural past. Including weather for the week ahead.
8.00 **Call the Midwife.** Valerie treats a pregnant Somali woman who has undergone female genital circumcision, but who goes into hiding when the Nonnatus Team arrange for her to go into hospital.
9.00 **SS-GB.** Archer rushes to the rescue after learning of a resistance plan to kidnap his son. But he is trailed every step of the way by Huth and may be placing the boy in even greater danger.
10.00 **BBC News.**
10.20 **Midlands Today;** Weather.
10.30 **Have I Got a Bit More Old News for You.** Stephen Mangan hosts an extended edition of the quiz, with UKIP parliamentary spokesperson Suzanne Evans and comedian Henning Wehn joining Ian Hislop and Paul Merton. (R)
11.15 **American High School.** One of the school's few white students throws a birthday party, while a member of the football team pursues a scholarship that may be his only hope of a brighter future.
12.00 **The Celebrity Apprentice USA.** The contestants have to organise a promotional event for South African tourism.
1.20 **Weather for the Week Ahead.**
1.25 **BBC News.**

BBC2

6.15 **Big Dreams Small Spaces.** Monty Don helps gardeners in Blackpool and Bristol. (R)
7.15 **An Island Parish: Anguilla.** (R)
7.45 **Around the World in 80 Gardens.** Monty Don investigates the effects of colonisation in Australasia. (R)
8.45 **Countryfile.** Ellie Harrison helps with the annual clean-up at Cheddar Gorge. (R)
9.45 **Saturday Kitchen Best Bites.** John Torode presents highlights of the series.
11.15 **Nigel Slater's Dish of the Day.** (R)
11.45 **Nigellissima.** (R)
12.15 **MOTD2 Extra.** Mark Chapman presents football discussion.
1.00 **Holiday of My Lifetime with Len Goodman.** Dave Myers reminiscences about his favourite holidays. (R)
1.30 **Money for Nothing.** Uearting hidden gems at a recycling centre in Witley, Surrey. (R)
2.15 **Wanted Down Under Revisited.** A family gives New Zealand a second chance. (R)
3.00 **Birds of Paradise: The Ultimate Quest.** Part two of two. The return of old injuries places the expedition in doubt. (R)
4.00 **Bobsleigh and Skeleton World Championships.** Action from the 2017 staging of the event in Konigssee, Germany.
6.00 **Six Nations Rugby Union.** John Inverdale introduces action from the third weekend of the tournament, featuring Scotland v Wales, England v Italy and Ireland v France.
7.00 **Dragons' Den: Pitches to Riches.** Richard Osman presents a look back at some of the most memorable contestants to feature on the show, and finds out what success they have enjoyed with their business ideas. (R)
8.00 **Dragons' Den.** The panel assess the profit-making potential of a Welsh delicacy, a male fragrance, and a food delivery service for Michelin star restaurants. Last in the series.
9.00 **Special Forces – Ultimate Hell Week.** The remaining recruits arrive in France to receive training with an elite tactical unit of the French police, where they face psychological and strategic challenges.
10.00 **FILM: Life of Crime (2013).** Premiere. Two criminals kidnap the wife of a corrupt real-estate tycoon, only to discover he is not willing to pay their ransom demand. Comedy, with Jennifer Aniston and Mos Def.
11.35 **Women's Six Nations Highlights.** Eilidh Barbour presents action from the third round of fixtures, which featured Scotland v Wales, England v Italy, and Ireland v France.
12.05 **FILM: Badlands (1973).** An alienated man goes on the run across Midwestern America with his teenage lover, killing anyone in their way. Terrence Malick's crime drama, with Martin Sheen and Sissy Spacek.
1.35 **Sign Zone: Question Time.** (R)
2.35 **Sign Zone: Holby City.** (R)
3.30 **This Is BBC2.**

ITV

6.00 **CITV: The Aquabats! Super Show!** 6.25 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures 6.35 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures 6.45 Sooty 6.55 Signed Stories: Share a Story 7.00 Oddbods 7.05 Thunderbirds Are Go 7.30 Scrambled! 7.35 Mr Bean: The Animated Series 7.50 Ultimate Spider-Man: Web Warriors 8.20 Horrid Henry 8.45 Teen Titans Go! 9.05 Adventure Time
9.25 **Countrywise: Guide to Britain.** Liz Bonnin witnesses the River Severn during one of its massive tidal bores. (R)
10.00 **Peston on Sunday.** Political magazine.
10.55 **Who's Doing the Dishes?** David Van Day is today's mystery cook. (R)
11.55 **ITV News and Weather;** Weather.
12.00 **The Voice UK.** The Battle phase begins. (R)
2.00 **Live Six Nations Rugby Union.** England v Italy (Kick-off 3.00pm).
5.30 **ITV News and Weather.**
5.45 **Unbelievable Moments Caught on Camera.** Alastair Stewart presents a second selection of extraordinary footage, including wakeboarders enjoying a memorable encounter with dolphins off the coast of Mexico.
7.00 **The Voice UK.** The second night of the Battles phase, in which the singers have to impress coaches Tom Jones, Will.i.am, Gavin Rossdale and Jennifer Hudson to remain in the contest.
9.00 **The Good Karma Hospital.** A medical case becomes personal for Ram as he prepares to attend a wedding, while Ruby treats a patient from the UK whose story does not add up.
10.00 **ITV News and Weather;** Weather.
10.20 **Peston on Sunday.** Political magazine, presented by Robert Peston, with ITV News National Editor Allegra Stratton. (R)
11.20 **Premiership Rugby Union.** Mark Durden-Smith and David Flatman present action from the 16th round of fixtures, including Harlequins v Leicester Tigers, Wasps v Gloucester, and Bristol v Bath.
12.20 **Phillip Schofield's South African Adventure.** In the first of three programmes, Phillip Schofield and wife Steph visit South Africa, where they admire Cape Town and Phillip gets to see a great white shark. (R)
3.00 **Chopping Block.** The remaining couples are tested on their technical skills and presentation as they debone and skin a chicken, although Conrad struggles with Rosemary Shrager's chicken kiev recipe. (R)
3.50 **ITV Ninescreen.** Text-based information service.
5.05 **The Jeremy Kyle Show.** The host invites guests to air their differences over family and relationship issues, and provides them with his own brand of no-nonsense advice. (R)

Channel 4

6.15 **The King of Queens.** Carrie becomes suspicious of Doug. (R)
6.40 **The King of Queens.** Arthur faces a romantic dilemma. (R)
7.05 **Everybody Loves Raymond.** Ray tries to be more attentive to Debra. (R)
7.30 **Everybody Loves Raymond.** Ray goes to the Super Bowl. (R)
7.55 **Everybody Loves Raymond.** Marie reveals a secret from Ray's past. (R)
8.25 **Frasier.** Niles and Frasier compete for a wine tour. (R)
9.00 **Frasier.** The shrink feels unappreciated. (R)
9.30 **Sunday Brunch.** With guests Sharon Horgan, Rob Delaney, Stormzy and Rufus Hound.
12.30 **The Simpsons.** Moe undergoes plastic surgery. (R)
1.00 **The Simpsons.** Bart sees into the future. (R)
1.30 **The Simpsons.** Barney gives up alcohol. (R)
2.00 **George Clarke's Amazing Spaces.** A man transforming a private jet into a crash pad. (R)
3.00 **Location, Location, Location.** Catching up with house-hunters in East Lothian and Wolverhampton. (R)
4.00 **Channel 4 News.**
4.30 **FILM: 101 Dalmatians (1996).** Disney comedy adventure remake, starring Glenn Close.
6.30 **The Jump.** The remaining contestants compete in two different disciplines. First, they face a speed ski challenge, the results of which will determine the line-up for the ski cross event.
8.00 **Rivers with Jeremy Paxman.** New series. The presenter travels along England's greatest rivers, meeting local people and exploring the history, traditions and wildlife. The first episode focuses on the Tweed.
9.00 **Homeland.** Keane is left on the sidelines, while Carrie's work starts to impact on her home life.
10.00 **Gogglebox.** The amateur critics share their opinions on what they have been watching during the week as the popular series returns for its ninth run. (R)
11.00 **FILM: Clear and Present Danger (1994).** A CIA analyst is caught up in the Colombian drug trade as he hunts the terrorists who killed a friend of the US president. Action thriller, with Harrison Ford and Willem Dafoe.
1.30 **The Last Leg.** Adam Hills, Josh Widdicombe and Alex Brooker are joined by celebrity guests for a comic review of the significant moments of the past seven days. (R)
2.30 **Hoarder SOS.** Experts persuade a Cambridgeshire woman to part with piles of perfume bottles. (R)
3.25 **Phil Spencer: Secret Agent.** Homeowners stuck in properties they cannot sell. (R)
4.20 **Kirstie's Handmade Treasures.** Flower arranging at the Royal Cornwall Show. (R)
4.40 **Four in a Bed.** The week's winner is announced. (R)
5.10 **Fifteen to One.** (R)

Channel 5

6.00 **Milkshake!** Peppa Pig 6.05 Peppa Pig 6.10 Milkshake! Monkey 6.15 Milkshake! Bop Box 6.20 Paw Patrol 6.30 Bob the Builder 6.45 Fireman Sam 6.55 Rupert Bear 7.05 Olly the Little White Van 7.10 Wanda and the Alien 7.20 Angelina Ballerina 7.40 Little Princess 7.55 Paw Patrol 8.10 Blaze and the Monster Machines 8.35 Noddy: Toyland Detective 8.55 Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom 9.10 Shimmer and Shine 9.35 Peppa Pig 9.45 Peppa Pig 9.55 Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom 10.05 Seaside Antics 10.10 **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.** Mona Lisa and Sal Commander try to form an alliance with the Kraang. (R)
10.45 **Football on 5: The Championship.** George Riley and Lynsey Hipgrave introduce highlights from the weekend's games. (R)
11.40 **Football on 5: Goal Rush.** Goals from the weekend's games in Leagues One and Two. (R)
12.10 **Inside Windsor Castle.** The dramatic series of events between 1936 and 1952. (R)
1.10 **Secrets of the National Trust with Alan Titchmarsh.** Alan visits Attingham Hall in Shropshire. (R)
2.10 **FILM: No Reservations (2007).** Romantic comedy, with Catherine Zeta-Jones and Aaron Eckhart.
4.10 **FILM: Bride Wars (2009).** Comedy, starring Kate Hudson and Anne Hathaway.
5.55 **5 News Weekend.**
6.00 **FILM: The Fifth Element (1997).** A 23rd-century New York cab driver protects a mysterious woman destined to save the world from destruction. Sci-fi adventure, starring Bruce Willis, Gary Oldman and Milla Jovovich. Edited for language and nudity.
8.15 **The EFL Cup Final Highlights: Football on 5.** Manchester United v Southampton. Action from the showpiece match, as Jose Mourinho's Red Devils met Claude Puel's Saints at Wembley Stadium.
9.00 **FILM: Olympus Has Fallen (2013).** A secret service operative is dismissed from duty after a tragic accident. As he prepares to leave his assignment, terrorists take control of the White House and hold the president hostage. The agent is trapped in the building, and uses his inside knowledge to rescue the head of state. Action thriller, starring Gerard Butler, Aaron Eckhart and Morgan Freeman. Includes 5 News Update at 10pm.
11.15 **FILM: The Terminator (1984).** A cyborg from the future is sent back in time to kill a woman whose unborn son is destined to save the human race. Sci-fi thriller, with Arnold Schwarzenegger and Linda Hamilton.
1.15 **SuperCasino.** Live interactive gaming.
3.10 **Secrets of the National Trust with Alan Titchmarsh.** Alan visits Attingham Hall in Shropshire. (R)
4.00 **Witches: A Century of Murder.** (R)
4.50 **House Doctor.** (R)
5.15 **Nick's Quest.** (R)

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Skoda	Skoda Octavia Estate 2.0Tdi CR Elegance	BV14VZJ	36,300	Brown	£12,995
Kia	Kia Venga 1.4 Ecodynamics 2 5dr	DS14XAH	33,912	Black	£5,491
Citroen	Citroen C3 Picasso BlueHD 1.6Hdi 5dr	KR16AXH	3,392	Silver	£9,391
Hyundai	Hyundai Velostar 1.6Gdi	LS62DYX	28,256	White	£8,791
Ford	Fiesta Zetec 1.0 Ecoboost 3dr Auto	CV64EXP	11,775	Silver	£8,791
Ford	Fiesta Zetec 1.0 Ecoboost 5dr	CV64PWJ	18,910	Black	£8,495
Ford	Fiesta Zetec 1.0Ecoboost 5dr	CV66AVU	1,221	White	£11,295
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Waterloo grounded as Castle smash seven

WATERLOO Rovers reserves found Bishop's Castle too hot to handle as they crashed 7-1 away to the unbeaten leaders of the Montgomeryshire League division two.

Rovers had been in the hunt in the first half before Castle took control after the break to move four points clear at the top.

The south Shropshire side remain firmly on course for promotion to the first division, after stretching their impressive winning run to 13 games, while Waterloo remain fourth from bottom.

Maesyrhaindir missed a chance of going second after being held 1-1 at lowly Llanfachchan.

Last season's champions Llanfair United reserves slumped 4-0 at Berriew reserves who consolidated their fourth spot in the first division courtesy of the victory. Llanfair are one place below in fifth position.

Abermule reserves progressed in the Mid Wales Trophies Consolidation Cup with a 2-0 passage at Llanidloes in the first round.

Meanwhile, Forden United will be back in business next season after calling it a day last term.

Berriew reserve team boss Jonny Roberts has been appointed manager and will take the reins at the end of the current campaign.

The aim will be to consolidate the team in the Montgomeryshire League before pushing for Spar Mid Wales League honours in the future.

Talgarth Town, meanwhile, maintained their five point lead at the top of the Watson Financial Mid Wales League (South) with first half goals from Scott Pavey and Kyle O'Shea securing a 2-0 home success over Newcastle.

Craig Evans fired a hat-trick as Brecon Northcote move second with a 6-0 drubbing of Penybont Reserves.

Hay St Marys, with games in hand, continued their challenge with second half goals from Rob McNamara (2), Kevin Jones, Chris Preece and Stu Rees earning a 5-0 win at St Harmon.

And Knighton Town Reserves also remain in the hunt with Dan Farmer, Bill Hyett, Harry Worton and Jack Brindley scoring in a 4-2 victory against Llandrindod Wells Reserves who replied through Jeff Jones and Rhys Davies.

Llanidloes Town Reserves suffered a further blow going down 3-1 at Rhayader Town Reserves with Alan Samuel (2) and a fit again Jordan McFadden netting for The Red Kites.

Superbike ace Davies excited for new season

CHAZ DAVIES will be hoping continuity is the key to success when he returns to World Superbike action this weekend.

The Mid Wales star unveiled his latest Panigale R, complete with new livery and a series of chassis, engine and electronics changes, during a launch event.

After six successive wins towards the end of the 2016 season, Davies and the Ducati team is now aiming for the 2017 riders' and manufacturers' titles.

Davies cemented his status as one of the top riders in the series securing 11 wins last year, more than any other rider, eventually finishing the championship in third place.

The Welshman, who signed a new two-year contract extension with the team in the summer, will be partnered by Italian Marco Melandri this year, who himself already scored 19 wins and 49 podiums over four years in WSK. The new season gets under way at Phillip Island, Australia, this weekend.

Davies knows a good start in the championship is vital for his title challenge.

"We are ready to start from scratch, even though we hope to maintain the form we had in the final part of last season, he said.

"During the winter I realised nothing stays still in this sport. We are all anxious to improve."

New Saints' Scottish adventure now over

FOOTBALL by John Bridgwater

THE New Saints' adventure in the Scottish IRN-BRU Cup came to an end after slipping to a 4-1 semi-final defeat to St Mirren at the JD Paisley Stadium.

After taking the lead through Ryan Brobbel's stunning 20-yard strike four minutes before half time, the game unravelled for the Saints in the space of five minutes in the second period.

St Mirren skipper Stephen McGinn smashed home a terrific leveller from 25 yards on the hour, and three minutes later TNS defender Steve Saunders was sent off for a wild challenge on McGinn.

Stevie Mallan then fired home the resulting free kick with the Saints looking to regroup after being down to 10 men.

It was an uphill battle after that, with John Sutton netting a third just moments after having a penalty saved by Paul Harrison.

Rory Loy then completed the scoring in the last minute as St Mirren set up a final meeting with Dundee United next month, while ending TNS' hopes of lifting an historic quadruple of trophies this season.

The Saints had started solidly, looking composed as they stifled the home side who were restricted to long range efforts.

At the other end, home stopper Billy O'Brien was almost caught napping on five minutes under pressure from Wes Fletcher before recovering to grasp the ball that had run through his legs.

TNS looked the more threatening, and Jamie Mullan had a good opening on 15 minutes when on the right before seeing his angled strike deflected into the side netting.

Brobbel almost unlocked the door on 35 minutes when he turned his marker before his powerful low 20-yard shot was well saved by the diving O'Brien.

Turnaround

The breakthrough, however, came four minutes before half time when the impressive Brobbel left the defence in his wake as he stormed toward the box before curling a terrific 20-yard strike inside the right post.

St Mirren came out for the second half with purpose, and the Scottish Championship side got back on terms with a stunning strike on the hour to spark a remarkable turnaround.

Skipper McGinn picked up a loose ball before breaking towards the box and smashed a 25-yard strike into the top right hand corner that gave keeper Harrison little chance.

The game was becoming increasingly frantic, and Saunders was shown a red card on 63 minutes for a wild challenge on McGinn.

When Mallan fired home the resulting free kick low inside the left post, TNS' 10 men were now facing a mountain to climb.

They rang changes by introducing Scott Quigley and Chris Sergeant as they battled to retrieve the game.

But as they pushed, the Welsh Premier high fliers were being repeatedly caught at the back, and conceded a penalty when Aeron Edwards handled.

Harrison saved Sutton's low spot kick, but it was a brief reprieve as Sutton made no mistake moments later when firing home after Kyle McGinn had squared from the right.

The scoring was completed in the last minute as a free kick was played to Loy, who was left in space to steer the ball past Harrison from seven yards.

SECOND-PLACED Berriew lost ground in the race for the Spar Mid Wales League division one title after being held 1-1 on a disappointing afternoon at Radnor Valley.

The Rhiewsiders struggled to get into their stride, and had to settle for a share of the spoils courtesy of a strike from Rhys Stephens.

They are now four points behind Rhayader Town with a game in hand after the high flying Red Kites returned to winning ways with a 3-1 success at Llanidloes Wells.

All the goals came in the first half through Christian Jones, Ashley Jones and Mark Davies, before Llandrindod responded with a free kick.

Third-placed CARNO slipped further off the pace after being held 1-1 at home to Knighton Town, the draw now seeing them 12 points adrift of Rhayader.

Experienced campaigner Colin Reynolds got the goal for Carno, but the hosts were left to reflect on two points dropped.

LLANIDLOES remain in sixth spot after gaining a hard-earned 1-1 draw a Aberaeron in a

Olympians race home with awards



The Oswestry Olympians men's team at the North Wales Cross Country League meeting and (below) Charlie Woolcock clears an obstacle during the race



OSWESTRY Olympians capped a terrific season by emerging with eight individual and three team awards from the Grand Prix Express North Wales Cross Country League.

A sunny winter's day and good conditions under foot welcomed runners for the league's final fixture.

Some 13 runners represented the men's senior team with Paul Jones, in his last race for Oswestry before his move to Shrewsbury, putting in a great run to finish fourth.

There was also a welcome boost in seeing Oli Blake come home in 14th position after his serious health problems, while there were solid performances from Tim Tansley, Craig Lammas, Brian Rothera and Steve Roberts, while Pete Jones maintained his improvements in each fixture.

The team finished third on day with 153 points (the first six runners to count) behind Shrewsbury and Buckley (149).

There were 141 finishers, with Paul Ward (v50 Telford) an impressive winner. The Olympians who competed were: 4 Paul Jones, 14 Oli Blake, 27 Tim Tansley, 34 Pete Jones, 35 Craig Lammas, 39 Tim Heard, 42 Brian Rothera, 46 Ian Lowe, 61 Rich Davies, 73

Jenny Collins, 94 Steve Roberts, 104 Charlie Woolcock, 111 Darren Walsh.

In the Masters event, the team came first with 16 points (three to score), beating second placed Buckley (18pts) and Shrewsbury, in third, with 47 points.

The senior Olympian Ladies, with 15 runners representing the club, also impressed in the last fixture to provide a fine finish to the campaign.

Stalwart Charlotte Jones (1st35) led the way with some terrific running, while impressive new member Viv McConnell (1st60), backed by Jacqui Gears and Lou Williams, also scored.

Another new member, Jenny Davis, crossed the line in fifth spot, while Ali Tickner, Yvonne Hill and Susie Hancock packed well with yet another newcomer Julie Lloyd Evans.

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Final Grand Prix placings

Men - Senior men: 1 Paul Jones 00 11pts, 2 Brett Edwards 17, 3 Tomos Roberts 17pts, 40 Jez Brown 4pts, 2 Tim Tansley 00 11pts, 3 Craig Lammas 00 21pts, 4 Pete

Jenny Collins 00 24pts, 5 Paul Jones 00 4pts, 6 Brian Rothera 00 18pts, 7 Ian Lowe 00 27pts

8 Steve Roberts 00 8pts, 9 Charlie Woolcock 00 11pts, 10 Graham Jones 4pts, 4 Eryri 375pts (nine teams)

Masters: 1 Oswestry Olympians 91pts, 2 Buckley 149pts, 3 Shrewsbury 195pts, 4 Eryri 134pts (eight teams)

Ladies - V35: 1 Charlotte Jones 6pts, 6 Lou Williams 21pts, 8 Kelly Clarke 39pts, 40 V40: 5 Jacqui Gears 18pts, 10 Liz Park 42pts, 50: 41 Debbie Hill 20pts, V55: 3 Susie Hancock 11pts, 5 Sarah Greaves 23pts, 6 V60: 1 Viv McConnell 4pts.

Teams - Men division one: 1 Shrewsbury 324pts, 2 Oswestry Olympians 843pts, 3 Buckley 1134pts, 4 Eryri 1809pts (eight teams)

Masters: 1 Oswestry Olympians 91pts, 2 Buckley 149pts, 3 Shrewsbury 195pts, 4 Eryri 134pts (nine teams)

Ladies - V35: 1 Charlotte Jones 6pts, 6 Lou Williams 21pts, 8 Kelly Clarke 39pts, 40 V40: 5 Jacqui Gears 18pts, 10 Liz Park 42pts, 50: 41 Debbie Hill 20pts, V55: 3 Susie Hancock 11pts, 5 Sarah Greaves 23pts, 6 V60: 1 Viv McConnell 4pts.

Teams - division one: 1 Eryri 324pts, 2 Oswestry Olympians 405pts, Masters: 1 Eryri 115pts, 2 Oswestry Olympians 143pts, 3 Telford 215pts, 4 Buckley 238pts (10 teams)

Llan boss not feeling too down despite loss

LLANFAIR United slipped into the bottom three of the Huws Gray Cymru Alliance after their 1-0 loss at Holycross Hotspur, but boss Rhys Stephens was heartened by his side's efforts.

It was a vast improvement on the previous week's four-goal drubbing at Buckley Town, and Stephens said there were plenty of positives following the encounter on Anglesey.

"Holyhead deserved the three points, they were the better team, but it was the sort of performance we can take something from," he said.

"If we continue to play like that for the rest of the season, then we will pick up points."

"We stayed in the game, and were unfortunate not to have a nailed on penalty 10 minutes from time."

Llanfair had the game's first chance when James Davies broke through, only to be denied by keeper Paul Pritchard.

Holyhead's best threats came from set plays, and took the lead when Mel McGuinness met a cross with a diving header.

United battled hard to stay in the hunt, and looked to have a clear penalty for handball in the box, but their appeals were turned down.

GUILDFIELD earned their first Cymru Alliance victory of 2017 with a hard fought 1-0 success against Mold Alex at Clos Myton, with an own goal from Matty Hughes nine minutes from time enough to secure the spoils.

There were few chances in a dour game, with defences on top, but the Guils edged the contest after the introduction of substitutes Mark Davies and Chris Cathrall.

Cattrall created the winning goal with a set piece which Robbie James and Mold's Hughes challenged for in the area, and the away defender flicked the ball into his own net.

Caerwys, in eighth, lost more ground on the leading pack after going down 2-0 at home to reigning champions Caernarfon Town.

Darren Thomas gave the visitors the lead midway through the first period before Nathan Craig doubled the advantage when converting a penalty eight minutes after the interval.

But the Bluebirds took the game to their high flying visitors for much of the second half with little reward.

The villagers had strong penalty claims turned down following a challenge on Will Thomas, while Mark Griffiths also hit the post on a frustrating afternoon.

Penrhyncoch's six match unbeaten run came to an end with a 1-0 home loss to basement rivals Ruthin Town whose Tom Sharples snatched the winner two minutes from time.

Saturday's fixtures
Huws Gray Cymru Alliance (2.30): Caerwys v Holycross Hotspur, Flint Town United v Porthmadog, Glyndwr University v Penrhyncoch, Horseshoe Town v Buckley Town

Wales Cup quarter-finals (2.30 unless stated): Guilsfield v Bala Town, Llanfair United v Caernarfon Town (1.30), Prestatyn own v Gap Connah's Quay (5.15), The New Saints v Ban-

Winter bowls title rivals are tied at the top

THE race to be crowned champions of Shropshire's top winter bowls league has taken another twist.

Wem USC and long-time leaders Bridgewater are now locked together again at the top of the District Invitation Winter League after contrasting fortunes last week.

Bridgewater beat bottom of the table Preees 10-0 (168-87 on aggregate) after winning all eight singles.

But first-time entrants Wem USC struggled to beat District B 6-4 (143-129) to leave the title rivals tied on 188 points with the finishing line within sight.

Adderley's improved form continued with a 7-3 (153-134) victory over Chester Road while District A remain in third place after beating Malpas Sports 8-2 (154-115).

FOOTBALL by John Bridgwater

windswept affair of few chances.

After Llan's stand-in keeper Paul Edwards was beaten early on, the visitors hit back to level five minutes from time when a wind assisted 30-yard free kick from Iain Edmunds found the net.

Sub Ryan Broadbent went close to winning it moments later when meeting a cross only to see his header cleared by the covering defence.

After picking up a welcome win three weeks before, WELSHPOOL slumped to a 2-0 loss at Machynlleth to remain deep in basement danger.

Relegation doomed MONTGOMERY suffered a day to forget as they crashed 14-0 at Bow Street for whom Steff Richards led the rout with four of the goals.

Tom Williams and Andrew Gittins both bagged hat-tricks, while Lion Jenkins (2), Tom Evans and Dylan Jones also got in on the act.

Mid-table Llanidloes Town gained their first win

of the year when overcoming Tywyn Bryncrug 2-1 at Victoria Avenue.

A late deflected free kick from Josh Evans secured the spoils for the Daffs after ex-Llan player Aston Heath had cancelled out an earlier opener from Ed Clarke.

High-flying KERRY are keeping a tight grip at the top of the second division after sweeping aside struggling FOUR CROSSES 4-0 - their 12th consecutive league victory.

Mark Hughes put the Lambs on course, before Luke Mumford scored twice either side of a goal from Daryl McWat.

Churchstoke were held 1-1 at home to Dolgellau while Llansantffraid Village went down 2-0 at home to Newbridge.

Abermule ran out comfortable 5-0 winners away at basement side Penybont, while in-form Aberystwyth University succumbed 2-1 at Builth Wells.

Improving DYFRYNN BANW picked up a useful 1-1 draw at Presteigne whose Kieran Lusher found the net for the home team.

Castle's big guns are on target to stun leaders

CASTLE Caereinion's hot shots used home advantage to produce a masterful shooting display to stun the league leaders Arddleian into a rare defeat – and throw the Montgomeryshire & District Airgun League title race wide open again.

With Gwilsfield level on points with Arddleian, and Churchstoke only two points adrift, but with matches in hand, the pursuit of honours is going to the wire.

The Castle big guns produced a stunning score of 208.1 to Arddleian's 203.0 with shooter of the week Richard Morgan firing a superb maximum score of 35.7, supported by Andy Mutch (35.4) and Hywel Morgan (35.4) getting possibles.

While Castle proved to be the league's team of the week, young Jack Francis (16) of Arddleian was not to be outdone by getting his own possible of 35.4.

Gwilsfield A had a potential banana skin derby away trip to their B string which produced another cracker of a match which the A team just took 200.9 to 199.8.

"I'm ageing by the day," said A team captain Paul Phillips after two nail-biting matches in one week, "but what a sport."

Brilliant

Churchstoke had an away trip to the young Foden side with the visitors taking this one 203.1 to 186.7 to stay in touch with the top two.

Jane Thomas, of Churchstoke, added yet another possible to her ever increasing collection with another brilliant 35.3.

Crew Green A claimed home status against Crew Green B at the Rodney which proved another cracking match, with the A team just edging it 200.3 to 199.6 with the slightly better consistency throughout the team.

However individual scoring rights went to the B team with Ian Brown getting a possible 35.5 and Sue Brown not being outdone by her brother scoring her first possible 35.4.

Llanfair, without two of their regular shooters, entertained a talented Newtown side and, despite an improving performance, they had to concede this one to a more consistent Newtown 196.7 to 192.0.

Saints keep up good run with victory

Tipton Town 1 St Martins 2

FORTUNES continue to look up for St Martins who took another step towards safety in the West Midlands League division one after completing the double over Tipton Town.

Having put seven goals past their hosts last month, the Saints found their opponents a tougher nut to crack, but prevailed with goals in each half from James Durman and Dave Easthope.

The result built on previous encouraging displays, keeping the Saints third bottom of the table, and two point clear of FC Stafford who also won.

They were ahead after 15 minutes when Shawn Melusi swung a free-kick into the box, the ball was flicked on by Matty Walters and, despite a fine save from the keeper, James Durman scrambled home the loose ball.

But it needed some fine saves from goalkeeper George Austin to keep the Saints in front, before the visitors doubled their advantage midway through the second period when Easthope smashed the ball home at the back post following a corner.

Tipton introduced three substitutes, and pulled one back, but St Martins held firm for a vital win following a stirring team display.



Try coming up – COBRA prop Bryn Edwards closes in on the Mold line before crashing over for the decisive try. ■ Pictures: Trevor Jones.

COBRA ease worries with a vital victory

RUGBY by John Bridgwater

COBRA boosted their hopes of preserving their status in rugby's North Wales League division one after securing a hard-fought 11-8 success at home to Mold Alex.

It was cagey and tense in an ill-tempered affair, but the Meifod side claimed a precious win in their fight for survival courtesy of a second half try from prop Bryn Edwards.

Despite the victory, they remain in the relegation zone, one point adrift of Ruthin who enhanced their survival prospects with a 30-0 hammering of Bro Ffestiniog.

But, after some disappointing results, COBRA would have been happy enough at the return to winning ways in their basement battle, and similar determination in future games should secure safety in the league standings.

The Llanfair side have no game on Saturday, before returning to duty at sixth placed Llandudno the week after as the relegation scrap heats up.

It was a battle against Mold, with frustration and tempers boiling over following some poor refereeing decisions which led to a couple of mass brawls.

Two long range penalties from Will Worthington carved a 6-0 advantage as COBRA started well with the elements in their favour, but Mold reduced the arrears with a penalty themselves.

The Meifod side were back on the attack, but could not add to their lead, before the visitors scored a try when their hooker went over from a five-metre line-out, the first time they had ventured into the 22.

Conversion

With the conversion missed, Mold led 8-6 at the interval, but COBRA held sway for much of the second half.

The visitors thought they had increased their advantage with a penalty, but the referee ruled it had drifted wide of the posts, which was to prove a key moment.

After that, the Llanfair side move upfield and scrum half Bryn Davies launched an incisive break before feigning prop Bryn Edwards who crashed through a tackle before just touching down.

The conversion was missed, but COBRA ensured there were to be no alarms in the last 20 minutes as they played much of the game deep in the Mold half.

■ ■ ■

Welshpool crashed 50-0 at promotion-chasing Llanidloes who gained revenge for a narrow defeat in the North Two East earlier in the season.

Pool had been struggling for player numbers, and were close to calling the game off with just half a team available by Thursday evening.

But several club members donned their boots to help the cause, and put up a battling display against their Powys rivals.

Llanidloes were restricted to a couple of unconverted tries in the first half, before breaking free in the second period.

In all, the hosts ran in eight touchdowns, with prop Gareth Anwyl, centre and captain Paul Jehu and wing Ben Davies all scoring twice, while Dick Jones and James Davies also crossed. Jordan Davies kicked five conversions.

Another near miss for Eagles



Oswestry's No8 Mike Davies catching the ball in the line-out and (below) making a tackle in midfield during the defeat in Wigan. ■ Pictures: Martin Ord.

OSWESTRY'S rugby players came close to a first win of the season in the South Lances and Cheshire division one before being edged out 20-15 at basement rivals Wigan.

The Eagles have just one draw to show for their efforts this term, but continue to battle hard despite a tough campaign that has witnessed 18 league defeats.

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More pressure resulted in a third unconverted try for the home side, before Andy Howell kicks a penalty to reduce the arrears to 15-8 at the interval.

Wigan continued in the second half as they had finished the first, again being denied by some fine defence before finding a way through for a fourth unconverted try.

Coach Dan Samuels now made tactical changes with the introduction of Jack Charmley and the dependable Mike Keaveny coming into the front row to add considerable strength to the pack.

This saw Oswestry turn the tables on Wigan and sustained pressure saw the hosts give away a string of penalties with Howell kicking for line-outs close to the touchline.

Now on the front foot, the

visitors gained a deserved score when, following an excellent kick ahead, Charmley followed up to touch down over the line.

The visitors pressed in the dying moments, with a scrum close to the Wigan line, but were denied a push over when the referee ruled the ball had been knocked forward.

It was a stirring effort from the Eagles who, despite a well-earned bonus point, are still chasing that elusive win. The Lanyon Bowdler man-of-the-match was Dean Lloyd-Hughes.

Oswestry take a break from the league when they entertain Woodrush on Saturday in the North Midlands Shield (2.15) before returning to league duty away to third-placed Broughton Park the following Saturday.

The latest returns from Shropshire golf clubs

BRIDGNORTH

Six Nations Sixes Competition: A Shimmin, D Taylor, T Merritt, G McKenna 129pts; A Morgan, J Whalin, D Read, I Rainford 128pts (cb); A Williams, C Toogood, A Poulton, G Poulton 128pts.

HAWKSTONE PARK

Men's January Stableford Division 1: K Vaughan 80-12c=68; P Corfield 82-1c=71; A Burdock 77-5c=72; Division 2: C Smith 88-20c=68; C Payne 93-22c=71; K Evans 89-18c=71.

Ladies' January Stableford: J Wales 36pts; V Jones-Roberts 29pts; M Moore 29pts.

Seniors' Stableford Division 1: P Hollins 46pts; P Greatley 40pts; C Cooper 39pts. Division 2: P Harris 38pts; D Brierley 37pts; B Stokes 35pts.

HENLLE PARK

Individual Stableford Division 1: C Jones 43pts; T Davies 41pts; R Grindley 40pts. Division 2: Morris 41pts (cb); I Griffiths 41pts; M Welch 39pts.

Yellow Ball Comp: D Southwell, J Parry & D S Jones 116pts; C Roberts, B J Jones & K Lloyd Jones 114pts; P Muir, D Hughes & G Hughes 107pts (cb).

Pairs Comp: H Thomas & S Edwards 46pts; L Jones & D Kellef 41pts; G Owen & D Parker 38pts.

Seniors' 234 Stableford: A Hardy, C Chare, C Clarke & S Jervis 103pts; J Postle, A Wright, C Andrews & F Woolnough 102pts; R Mazzarella, P Hart, D Broomhead & N Morris 98pts.

Texas Scramble: R Owens, G Nicol & B Evans 62.05pts; S Edge, P Hampson & M Cunningham 63.35; M Jones, J Fletcher & S Jervis 63.65.

HILL VALLEY

Ladies' No2 Stableford (Emerald): S Wynn 19 pts (21); C Ellwood 14pts (21); G Thomas 13pts (16).

Winter Pairs (9 Hole - Emerald): S Lockett & C Sheard 50-13c=37; S Wynn & B Siertsema 50-12c=38; I Stiles & C Ellwood 53-13-40.

LEOMINSTER

Pairs Multiplication Stableford: Ryan Painter (6) & Ron Painter (17) 66pts; S Morgan (4) & R Maloney (Jnr) 65pts; C Malcolm (12) & T Morgan (14) 64pts.

Hand-in-one K Gibbons.

February Stableford Division 1: N Morris (7) 35pts; C Brimell (4) 33pts (cb); C Chadd (11) 33pts (cb); Division 2: A Beavan (17) 36pts; T Morgan (14) 34pts; M Speed (17) 32pts (cb); Division 3: P Griffiths (20) 35pts; R Tracy (19) 34pts; M Pearson (21) 22pts.

General Scramble Winners: T Button, A Tandler, M Privett 61-8.8-52.2; Runners-up: M Davies, T Carver, R Garvey, J Lindsay 60-7.1-52.9.

Pairs Texan Winners: J Mee (5) & T Merrick (5) 66-2.9-63.5; A Chambers (17) & M Speed (17) 71-3.5-68.5; C Chadd (11) & J Small (14) 75-6.3-68.7 (cb).

Hand-in-one: G Flowers.

Rowlands is head boy for happy Town

TWO headed goals from Tom Rowlands saw FC Oswestry Town halt a three-match losing run with a welcome 4-2 home success over Holker Old Boys at Park Hall.

After their mini slump, Town got back to winning ways, but they left it late with two goals in the last three minutes sealing the points that cemented their mid-table position in the Hallmark North West Counties League division one.

After a slow start, Mike Barton's men took an interval lead through Tom Rowlands who headed home a cross from new signing Craig Harris five minutes before the break.

They had further chances, and when Rowlands nodded a second goal three minutes into the second period from a Brendon Price free-kick, it looked like the hosts were well set for the points.

Rowlands and Price were both then denied with just the keeper to beat, but Holker got back on terms with a quick-fire brace from Jamie Pattinson on 75 and 77 minutes.

However, Town were not to be denied and regained the lead in fortuitous fashion when Price's free kick drifted into the net three minutes from time.

Debutant Harris, a recent recruit from Caersws, completed an encouraging game when being put through by Jack Harris to seal the win in the closing moments.

Buoyed by the win, Town now look to keep up the momentum at Bolton club Daisy Hill, another side who lie below them in the league.

FC Oswestry Town's reserves were also in winning form, sweeping aside Brown Cle 4-1 in the Mercian Regional League division one as they made it back-to-back wins.

Ten-man St Martins, also mid-table in the first division, were 2-1 winners away to AFC Broseley, Aaron Davies getting both the goals.

GOBOWEN CELTIC'S poor run continued after being downed 4-2 at home to Childs Ercall to slip to seventh in the premier division.

OSWESTRY SPORTS DESK 01743 283301

Shooting
League leaders are
shot down— P39

Rugby
COBRA relief after
vital victory – P39



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TNS look to
bounce back
after defeats

HOLDERS The New Saints look to pick themselves up from back-to-back defeats when they continue the defence of the Welsh Cup with Saturday's quarter-final tie at home to Bangor City (2.30).

After going 31 games unbeaten, the Saints have since lost twice - their 1-0 Welsh Premier loss away to Carmarthen being followed by last weekend's 4-1 defeat at the hands of St Mirren in the Scottish IRN-BRU Cup.

They now take on a revitalised Bangor City at Park Hall on Saturday, looking to avoid a hat-trick of successive reverses.

Boss Craig Harrison is backing his side to put the IRN-BRU Cup defeat behind them as they look to keep a hold of a trophy they have won for the last three seasons, and six times in all.

"We're disappointed obviously to have gone out of the IRN-BRU Cup, but we can take a lot of pride from the way we have performed in our first season in the competition," he said.

"It was a great feat for us to get to the semi-finals, and I would like to think we have done our club and the Welsh Premier League proud."

"But we now need to put that behind us, and we're all looking forward to defending the Welsh Cup in what will be a difficult game against Bangor."

The Saints have already defeated Bangor three times this season, twice in the league, 4-0 at home and 2-1 away, and once in the Nathaniel MG Cup when prevailing 2-0.

But past results will count for little, with Bangor making the trip to Park Hall in confident mood having bolstered their squad with some quality signings that has been reflected in their recent performances.

Harrison, meanwhile, pointed to a 20-minute spell at the start of the second half as TNS bowed out of the Scottish IRN-BRU Cup with a 4-1 semi-final exit at St Mirren.

The Welsh Premier high fliers were 1-0 up at the interval courtesy of Ryan Brobbel's terrific 20-yard strike, but the complexion of the game changed after the break.

Buddies skipper Stephen McGinn smashed home a 25-yarder on the hour, and three minutes later TNS defender Steve Saunders was sent off for a poor challenge on McGinn.

Stevie Mallan then fired home the resulting free kick before late goals from

**St Martins turning
the season around**

ST MARTINS, with one defeat in five games, have no action this weekend - before visiting Wednesfield in the quarter-final of the West Midlands League division one cup the following week.

The Saints, with nine games remaining, maintained their pursuit of safety in the league with a 2-1 success at Tipton Town as fortunes continue to look up.

Tipton were up for the game as we beat them 7-2 at home, but we were well organised, resilient and deserved to win," said boss Dan Stevens. "The only disappointment was that we did not keep a clean sheet.

"It was an important win as a lot of teams around us are picking up points as well."

RIVALS OUT TO MAKE HISTORY

FOOTBALL by John Bridgwater

NEIGHBOURS Llanfair United and Guisfield aim to rewrite the history books on Saturday as they attempt to book their places in the JD Welsh Cup semi-finals for the first time.

United are already in uncharted territory having never before reached the last eight were they will host Cymru Alliance rivals Caernarfon Town with a 1.30pm kick-off at the Mount Field.

Guisfield have reached this stage once before, and now face the acid test at home to in-form Welsh Premier side Bala Town (2.30) if they are to keep their flag flying.

Both clubs are savouring huge occasions, with an additional £7,500 on offer for the winners to further boot their earnings in the competition.

"It's a massive game for us, no doubt about it," said Llanfair boss Rhys Stephens. "There is a lot of money at stake, and the financial rewards will keep the club ticking over for the next couple of years.

"Caernarfon will be the favourites, and justifiably so, but we won't just be making up the numbers. We don't just hope to win, we want to win.

"They will be bringing hundreds of supporters, so there will be a real cup tie atmosphere. It's a game everyone's looking forward to."

A 4-1 passage against Welsh Premier side Cefn Druids took Llanfair into the quarter-finals for the first time in the club's history, James Davies netting a hat-trick in the performance of the round.

Fantastic day

"It was a fantastic day, not just for the players, but for everyone involved with the club," said Stephens. "The win over Cefn Druids shows that we can match these teams. When we were 3-0 down at half time at Flint in an earlier round, had someone said we'd get to the quarter-finals now, I would have thought they were mad.

"But it shows what can happen, and that is why we will give it a good go on Saturday, and keep believing."

The high-profile tie will be a welcome break from the pressures of Cymru Alliance survival after Llanfair slipped down to third from bottom following last weekend's 1-0 loss at Holyhead Hotspur.

"Holyhead deserved the three points, but it was the sort of performance we can take something from," said Stephens.

"If we continue to play like that for the rest of the season, then we will pick up points."

GUISFIELD will be under no illusions about the size of their task when they entertain Bala Town - but can take heart from overcoming Welsh Premier opposition Cardiff Met University 4-2 in the previous round.

"Bala are a very good team, direct and physical, and we will have our work cut out," said Guisfield manager Dan Barton. Being at home will be a leveller, but it will be a tough game for us."

The Guisfield have been in the last eight once before downed by eventual cup winners Bangor City at Clos Mytton back in 2008.

Town bid to shore up defence



Oswestry Town goalkeeper Richard Cowdroy tips a shot over the bar. Pic: Ian Jones.

FC OSWESTRY Town have bolstered their back line with the addition of Leigh Jones - while another defender could also be on their way to the North West Counties League division one club.

It is hoped that Jones, who has joined from FC Nomads of Connah's Quay, could have international clearance in time for Saturday's trip to Bolton side Daisy Hill. His previous clubs include GAP Connah's Quay and Buckley Town.

FA Cup

Defensive frailties have plagued Town this season, but the arrival of Jones will help shore up the back line in the run-in to the season.

"We would like to finish in the top eight to gain automatic entry for the FA Cup, but it will be a tough ask," said boss Mike Barton.

"But whatever happens, we want to finish as high as we can, so it's important to beat the sides below us as the middle of the table has

now closed up."

Forward Craig Harris, who signed from Caerphilly, had an encouraging debut in the 4-2 win against Holker Old Boys last weekend, scoring one and assisting with another.

"We were always in control against Holker, but made hard work of it," added Barton. "But the lads showed good character to win in the end."

It is hoped a defender with Cymru Alliance experience will start training with Town in a view to joining the club.

Next up is a trip to Bolton side Daisy Hill who lie below Town in the table.

The sides drew earlier in the season at Park Hall, and the hosts will pose a threat with the free-scoring Ashley Stott in their ranks.

Stott, whose past clubs include Welsh Premier sides Bangor City and Aberystwyth Town, has netted an impressive 33 goals so far this season.

Lions Quay hosts huge boxing gala

BOBBY Sudlow will be taking to the ring in front of sell-out crowd at the Lions Quay on Saturday in the biggest boxing gala Oswestry has seen for 30 years.

Fighting for just 12 months, the 36-year-old from St Martins will be defending his Midlands semi-professional heavyweight title for the second time in an event organised by former champion boxer Roddy Doran, who himself fought for two world titles.

Sudlow will be topping the bill which includes 10 other fighters, all from the Oswestry area, who will be taking on opponents as far afield as Birmingham and Manchester. The card gets underway at 7pm.

All 300 tickets have sold for the event as Sudlow looks to make a successful second defence of his heavyweight crown following a whirlwind year.

Taking inspiration from his father Ricky's battle against lung cancer, it all started when he took to the ring last March to raise money for the Lingen Davies Centre in Shrewsbury.

Since then, Sudlow has proved a big hit in the sport and hopes victory against his Lancashire opponent on Saturday will pave the way for a chance to fight for the British heavyweight semi-professional title later in the year.

He has had four successful fights in the last 12 months, and is now relishing the chance to take to the ring in his home town, after previous bouts in Shrewsbury.

"There's been a lot of interest, tickets could have sold out twice," he said.

"My first fight was back in March, and since then I've got stronger and fitter."

Also on the bill on Saturday is female fighter Holly Welch along with other Oswestry area fighters Stu Parry, Lewis Jones, Liam Arnold, Anthony Butler, Dean Edwards, Kevin Pilsbury, Russell Pearce, Daniel Lawrence and Jimmy Brown.

**Atherton signs off
the season in style**

CHAMPION downhill racer Rachel Atherton has topped off a glittering season by winning the prestigious Laureus World Action Sportsperson of the Year award.

The Llanrhedr ace became the first rider to complete an unbeaten year when winning all seven rounds of the UCI Downhill Mountain Bike World Cup, as well as the world title for a fourth time.

The former pupil of Oswestry's Marches School, who has now chalked up 33 World Cup series wins in her trophied career, beat off several top names to take the award. Rachel is the first mountain-biker to lift the Laureus trophy.

Also recognised were eight-time Olympic sprint champion Usain Bolt and four-time Olympic gold gymnast Simone Biles who were named sportsman and sportswoman of the year for their 2016 achievements.

The awards were made in Monaco in a glittering ceremony hosted by Hugh Grant, but Atherton missed the chance to step down the red carpet due to difficulties arranging flights.



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